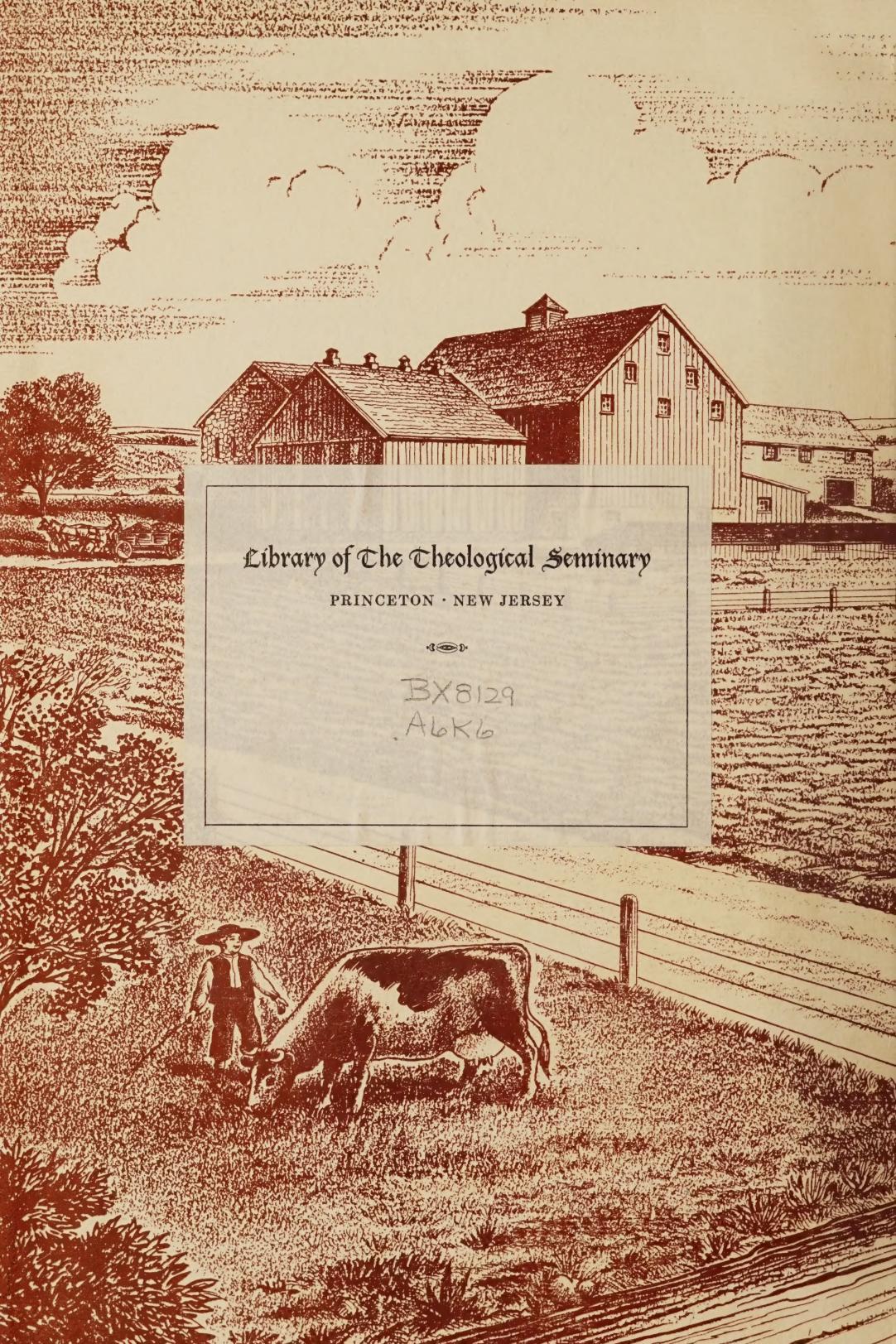




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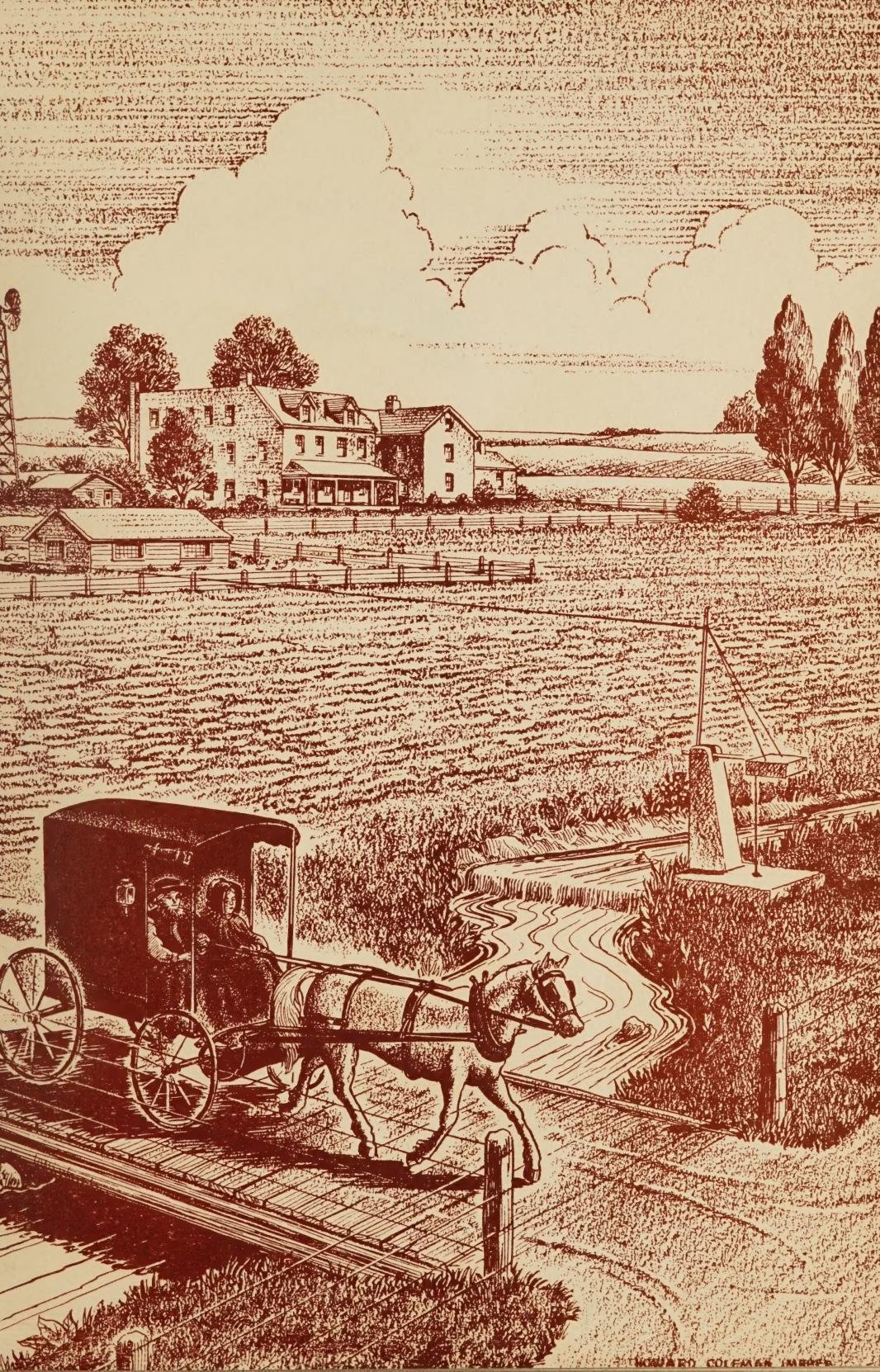


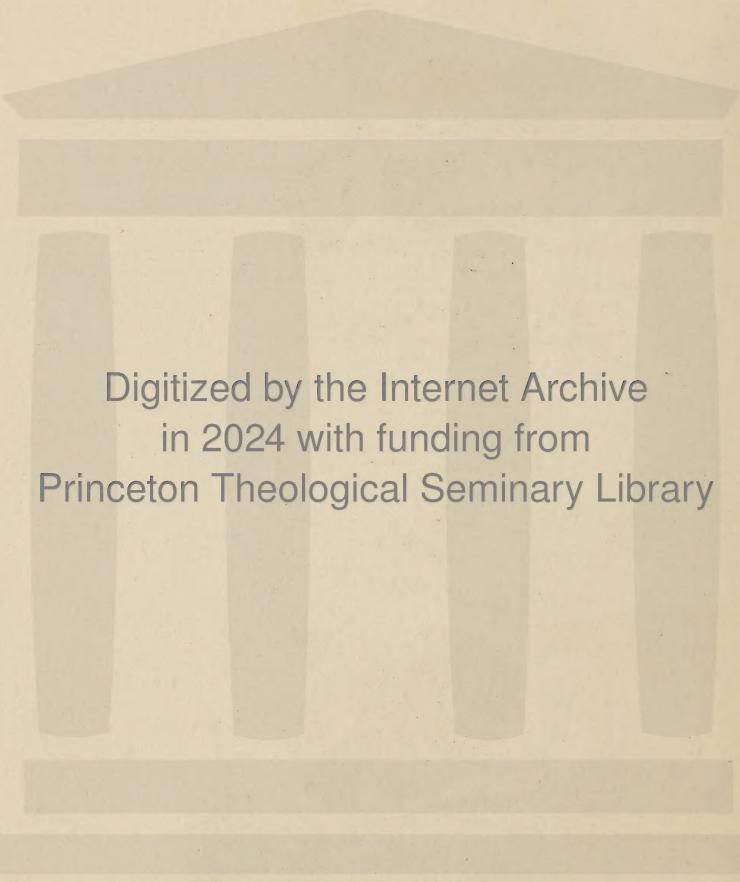
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# History and Customs of the Amish People





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HISTORY AND CUSTOMS OF

# The Amish People

by H. M. J. Klein



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### *G R E E T I N G S*

*May the Peace and Good Will of a Happy Christmas be yours. May the New Year bring you new Joys, new Hopes and new Blessings . . . With this Christmas Greeting we present this unusual story of an old fashioned folk whose way of life is as simple as the life of the shepherds of old who watched their flocks in the field by night and heard the songs of the angels heralding a new age . . . This narrative of the history and customs of the Amish people was written by Dr. H. M. J. Klein who for thirty-five years was the Audenried Professor of History and Archaeology in Franklin and Marshall College at Lancaster in Pennsylvania. Dr. Klein is the author of a number of books on local history and church history. He has contributed extensively to periodicals on education and public affairs . . . The author*

*treats his subject with sympathetic understanding and fairness. He is not unmindful of the defects and limitations of the Amish people. But he also has a deep respect for the rare qualities and genuine accomplishments of these early settlers and pioneers whose descendants are to this day 'true sovereigns of the soil,' who typify the dignity of toil and make the valleys blossom as the rose . . . In a young country like the United States, a community group or even an institution that has had a continuous existence for more than two hundred years and has maintained its identity and culture is worthy of record. With this thought we present "The History and Customs of the Amish People."*

# History and Customs of the Amish People







### THE AMISH IN EUROPE

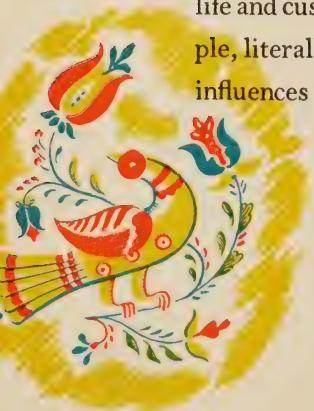
In recent years a widespread interest has been developed in the folkways of the Old Order Amish people. This is due partly to a natural curiosity concerning a segregated group to whom all modern trends are repulsive, and who have maintained a strongly integrated and cohesive type of community life in the face of a constantly changing world. An Amish community is like a small sector of sixteenth or seventeenth century Europe transplanted to the fertile agricultural sections of America. It represents the transit of a pre-industrial revolution civilization into a new highly industrialized world, without any desire for adjustment to new conditions. This very fact in itself makes these people interesting to us who never lived in the sixteenth century or in Switzerland, and to whom a community without automobiles, telephones or even radios is almost considered utopian. To them it is Paradise.



In our complex and confused civilization, with its noise and its wars, its smoke and its nervous tensions, it seems to me to be rather refreshing to realize that there are still people to whom life is so *simple* and so certain in its tenets—an old way of life, a good way of life, lived close to the land and to God.

The Amish people are different from most of us. They are unique in their folkways. They are unconventional in their dress and language. They may seem queer to our more sophisticated atomic age. But so were the Pilgrims, the Puritans and the Quakers queer in their dress, speech and attitude toward contemporary problems—yet they were a mighty influence in their day and generation and adapted themselves more readily to changing conditions. The Puritans carried guns, fought Indians and founded Commonwealths. The Quakers founded cities and engaged in Commerce and in Industry. The Amish people are farmers by heritage and by choice. They shun cities. Professional life has no appeal for them. They have been consistent and conscientious pacifists since the days when their forefathers left Europe to escape from the many religious wars. But they have built up strong rural communities and have maintained them at the highest standard of fertility—adding farm to farm with each new generation. They love the good land.

Small wonder then that there is an increasing interest in The Old Order Amish and a growing appreciation for their manner of life and customs. There is no secret in their way of life. It is simple, literally Scriptural and genuinely sincere. The dominating influences in their life are religion, the family and the farm.



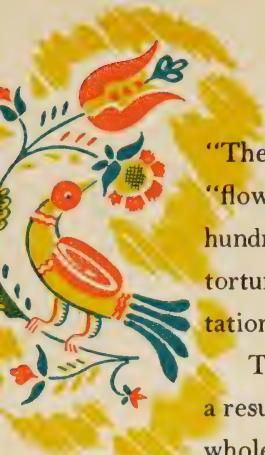
## BACKGROUND IN EUROPE

Historically the Amish are an outgrowth of the Anabaptist movement in sixteenth century Europe. They were looked upon as radicals in the days of the Swiss Protestant Reformation. They raised a protest against Protestantism and attempted to build a new Church on the voluntary principle of select congregations after what they believed to be an Apostolic pattern, separated from the world and from the State. In consequence of this, they were cruelly persecuted by imprisonment, exile, torture, fire and sword. They became martyrs of conscience in an intolerant age. Driven from place to place they became fugitive evangelists.

The Anabaptists are so-called because they rejected infant baptism, called themselves 'brethren,' and later became known as "The Plain People" because they maintained a distinctive cut of dress which they believed was a means to the attainment of a simple Christian life.

These religious radicals of the sixteenth century were dead in earnest. The iron seared their souls. In Zurich, Switzerland they marched through the streets in sack cloth proclaiming "woe woe, unto Zurich." The authorities drowned some of them in cruel irony. "He who dips shall be dipped" they said. In Basle and Berne, they were banished by the Council with the threat that they should be drowned if they returned. In Germany and Austria they fared worse. The decree went forth that "every Anabaptist person of either sex be put to death by sword, or fire or otherwise." Duke William of Bavaria issued the decree to behead those who recanted, to burn those who refused to recant.





“The blood of those poor people” says an eminent authority “flowed like water so that they cried to the Lord for help. But hundreds of them of all ages and both sexes suffered the pangs of torture without a murmur, despised to buy their lives by recantation, and went to the place of execution singing psalms.”

The blood of the martyrs is always the seed of the Church. As a result of persecution, the Anabaptists spread throughout the whole of western Europe, then to America, and eventually in the Baptist denomination to the ends of the earth.

Of this religious and social movement—for it became a revolt of peasants and artisans against oppression—the plain sects, Mennonites, Amish, Dunkers and many other similar religious groups became a vital part. Up in Friesland, the most northerly province of the Netherlands, these scattered fugitive groups found a leader in the person of Menno Simons. His own brother had suffered martyrdom. ‘Aided by the winnowing fan of persecution’, Menno Simons was re-baptized and admitted into the circle of the Anabaptists. He introduced a semblance of order in the scattered groups. It is said that he spent some twenty-five long laborious years in visiting Anabaptist communities and in uniting them in a simple and brotherly association. He insisted at all times on the most rigid discipline, inculcated the ideas of non-resistance, emphasized the evils of state control over the church, and taught the need of personal conversion. From his labors have come all the modern Baptist churches which have had such an honorable history throughout the world, with adult baptism as their sign and seal.

### *ORIGIN OF THE AMISH*

Quite naturally, in a loosely organized association of religious groups there were bound to be divisions and subdivisions without end. In 1693, Jacob Ammon (Amman), a Mennonite preacher who resided in the canton of Berne, Switzerland began his work as reformer. He was a man of conservative nature and of decided opinions on church discipline. He must have regarded himself in the light of an Old Testament Prophet.

The rock on which the old brethren split was known as the principle of 'shunning' or 'avoidance' of all who had been excommunicated from the Church. At the same time it was the practice of the Swiss church to 'shun' a member who had been expelled from the group, at the communion table only. But this was considered too lenient a practice by Jacob Ammon. He insisted that 'shunning' be extended to social and domestic relations. He insisted that the wife and children of an expelled member must not be permitted to eat with him at the same table. He insisted that the usual conjugal relations between husband and wife were to be suspended until proper penitence had been manifested by the one expelled and until full restoration into the church had been secured. This is the distinctive feature of the followers of Jacob Ammon. The doctrine was not established without controversy. Ammon was opposed by another leader in the Church, Hans Reist, who often argued that even the Christ ate with publicans and sinners according to the scriptures. "They said unto his disciples. Why eateth your master with publicans and sinners?" Matt. 9:11.

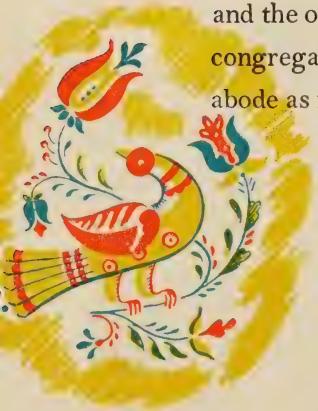


Both of these men with their followers held several conferences in a barn. They came to the breaking point. The result was that Ammon headed one faction and Reist headed the other. After that there were two distinct groups.

The Ammon faction became known as the Amish. For a time they were called the Amish Mennonites. As a special symbol, a mark of distinction, and a sign of separation from the world and from other churches, Ammon introduced the use of hooks and eyes instead of buttons on the clothes of men. He also introduced the practice of feet washing. He was very insistent on the practice of bodily 'shunning'. In the year 1700 some of the followers of Ammon tried to effect a reconciliation with Reist and his group but failed in the effort. The division between them remains to this day without reconciliation.

The influence of Ammon on his followers was so pronounced that he succeeded under threat of excommunication in imposing 'a certain style of dress, in hats, clothing, shoes, stockings and the hair on the head.' He said: "If there should be any who wants to imitate the world with beard shaved off, with long hair, and proud clothing, and not confess that it is wrong, he shall be severely punished."

The followers of Jacob Ammon in Europe were comparatively few. The Amish Church began in the Swiss canton of Berne, and then spread to small settlements in Alsace, Lorraine and the other Rhine regions. Today there are very few Amish congregations, if any, in the old world. They left their ancient abode as religious refugees centuries ago.

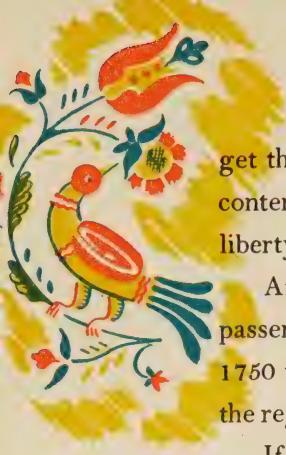


## THE AMISH COME TO AMERICA

The Travels of William Penn in Holland and Germany and his pamphlets on the province in the new world which King Charles II had granted to his 'Trustie and well beloved Subject' greatly influenced the movements of the persecuted people of the Rhine valley all the way from Switzerland to Holland. As the Pilgrims had left Leyden a hundred years before, so the Mennonites and the Amish began their migration at the opening of the eighteenth century, to find religious liberty on the land of William Penn.

In the city of Berne all males over fourteen years of age were ordered to register with the military force. This the followers of Menno Simons and Jacob Ammon refused to do. In June 1710 the Mayor of Berne warned them that if at any time or by any means "any of you or of your pernicious sect return to this country, not only will all your transactions be made void, your goods confiscated, your persons arrested and imprisoned, but the extreme penalty of death will be inflicted upon every Mennonite man, woman and child." From that time the migration of Mennonite and Amish families took place. They went from the Rhine valleys to Amsterdam, thence to London and set sail for Penn's Land in America. He had won their love and confidence when, two score years before, he had travelled up and down Europe preaching principles of peace to a war-weary people. They came across the wide Atlantic, tossed in their tiny barks in order to worship God according to their conscience and to till the soil of the good earth in a new land. They wanted to for-





get the merciless cruelty of their enemies, and to live a life of contentment and of peace in a land of plenty where religious liberty should be their portion.

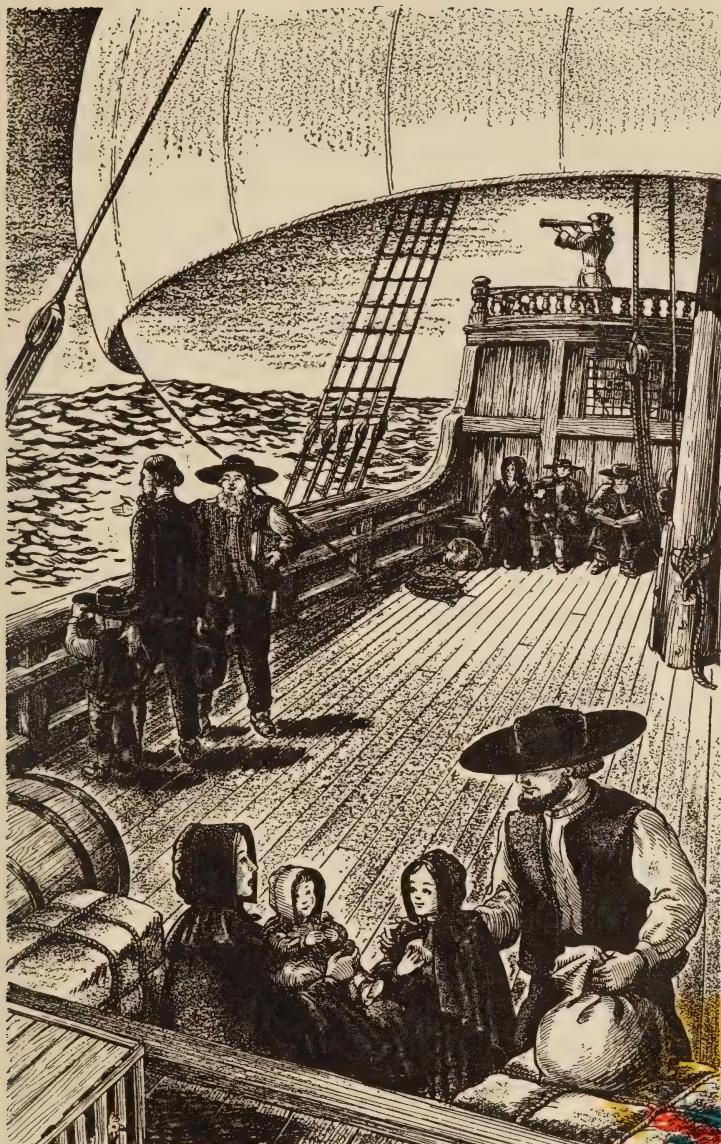
After 1727 Amish names are found in goodly numbers in the passenger lists of ships arriving in the port of Philadelphia. By 1750 the names of many Amish adherents are to be found in the region of Berks and Lancaster county, Pennsylvania.

If any one wishes to know exactly why they came to the Province of William Penn, the following memorial, which is still extant, presented by the Amish Mennonites to Proprietor Penn under date of May 20, 1718, will furnish the answer.

“To the Most Worshipful and Respectable Proprietor of the Province, William Penn, and His Deputy Governor:

“We came to Pennsylvania to seek an asylum from the persecution to which we had been subjected in Europe. We knew the character of William Penn and rejoiced God had made such a man. We had been told that the Indian right to the soil had been extinguished by purchase to enable the conscientiously scrupulous to settle and enjoy their religious opinions without restraint. It was with primitive notions like the Patriarchs of antiquity we removed to the land of promise, but to our grief and surprise and mortification the government had neither the conscience of the proprietary nor the faith of the Amish. We were invited to settle in this land by William Penn.

“Listen to us; if you do not, who will? We are required to obey laws in whose making we cannot participate (the Amish differed from the other Mennonites at that time in not voting).



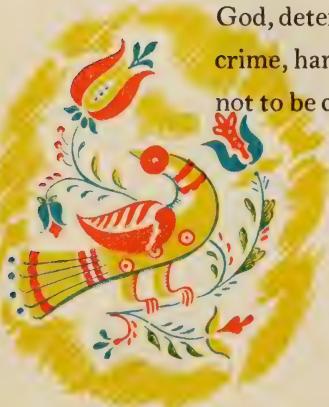
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We are governed by the laws of God, you by the laws of man. Those of human authority cannot control us in opposition to His will declared in the Holy Scriptures. We do not attend elections we enter not your courts of Justice, we hold no offices either civil or military. We did not object to the payment of our land, because it was purchased by William Penn, and you are entitled to remuneration, but we hold it to be a grievance that, entertaining nearly the same opinions as the respectable Society of Friends, we should like them be subjected to Military and Civil Jurisdiction, especially when it is recollected that the head proprietor whom we now have the honor through you to address is himself a member of that society. The Society of Friends at least ought to have escaped such treatment. We are not a little *people*, for our neighbors, the Mennonites and the Dunkers are also liable to be insulted by the tyranny of authority.

“We came to Pennsylvania to enjoy freedom of mind and body, expecting no other imposition than that declared by God. As we have been taught to hurt not our neighbors, so do we expect that our neighbors will do us no injury. As we cannot contract debts, we require no law for their recovery.

“If we should be so unfortunate as to have indigent neighbors, we shall provide for their wants. The same inclination that tends to the preservation of our children prompts to the care of every member of our own flock. Conscience, the voice of God, deters us from the commission of crime. As we commit no crime, hard is it for us to suffer for those of others. We ought not to be compelled to pay for the maintenance of convicts.



"We ask for permission to pass our lives in innocence and tranquility. Let us pursue our avocations unmolested. We respect your rights, respect our customs. We ask nothing of you but what the Word of God can justify."



### *AMISH SETTLEMENTS*

It is not known definitely when the Amish first settled in eastern Pennsylvania. Probably their first congregation in America was established near Hamburg, Berks County in 1737. Jacob Hartzler who lies buried beneath a large pine tree not far from the town of Hamburg is regarded as the first Bishop of the Amish Church in America. During the French and Indian war the redskins broke through the gap of the Blue Mountains and drove many of the Amish families from their homes. Some of these early Amish settlers were killed in raids and others were captured by the Indians.

There were early Amish settlements along the Tulpehocken Creek, along Maiden Creek and in the Oley section of Berks County. There was another settlement near Malvern in Chester County, known as the Whiteland Colony.

It was in Lancaster County however that the Amish refugees found their real Paradise. The settlements in the regions of the Conestoga and Pequea creeks have continued to be prosperous Amish communities, and today this region still constitutes the largest Amish settlement in America. Later as the generations increased and the available fertile land became more difficult to secure in the eastern counties of Pennsylvania, migrations



followed into the more western sections of the Commonwealth; Juniata, Mifflin, Somerset and Westmoreland counties. Others found a home in Ohio, Iowa, Indiana and Illinois. The most recent venture of the Amish people consisted of the migration of a few families to St. Mary's County, Maryland, which apparently was not much of a success because the soil was too sandy for the kind of agriculture in which they were usually engaged.

Immediately after the first World War, the Plain Sects in Russia determined to retain their religious principles, fearing liquidation, dreading military service, objecting to farm collectivization and to communism in general, left the country of the Bolshevik regime for Canada and South America, especially the region of Paraguay. The Amish people of America, as well as the Mennonites helped in the financing of this more recent migration to the American continent.



### *THE PLAIN PEOPLE*

The appellation "The Plain People" is a very general term which includes a number of the religious groups, having some essential common characteristics and yet differing widely. It is rather important that these similarities and differences be recognized, if we wish to understand the position that the Old Order Amish people occupy in the groups.

They all stem originally from Menno Simons. They all reject infant baptism, follow doctrines of non-resistance, non-swearings of oaths, slight, if any, participation in civil government, exclusive social spirit, not well disposed toward higher learning, conservative in opinion and fixed in habits of dress and manner of life. All of them deserve respect for the practice of their simple faith and their strong devotion to what they believe to be right.

The two extreme wings of the Plain People are the Mennonites, the most progressive of the groups, and the Old Order



Amish, the most fixed and conservative. The Mennonites have slowly but surely changed their habits and opinions. They have adjusted themselves to changing conditions. Many have discarded old styles of dress for new. Restrictions are modified by the more liberal branches. The caps and the bonnet are still required as a symbol of church loyalty. They have founded at least four colleges, and encourage the training of their young men and women in secular as well as in religious education.

(1) The Mennonites are divided into two groups, the Old and the New. The Old Mennonites are liberal in their tendencies. The New group or so-called Reformed Mennonites hold undeviatingly to the doctrine of 'Shunning' or 'Avoidance'. It is said that they will not attend the funeral of some of their nearest relatives because they have been taught that one must not listen to any other preacher than their own. This branch had its origin in Lancaster County. Its founder was a farmer in West Lampeter Township who insisted upon the strict observance of the ban, prescribed the act of feet-washing, prescribed divorce. To avoid carnal influence in bringing about marriage, it was decided that unmarried members should not meet together in private company; proposals of marriage were to be made through a third person. The parties themselves were not to converse with each other on the subject of marriage until the proposal was made. They are quiet, peaceful, generous in establishing homes for the orphan and the aged, but absolutely fixed in the idea that they and they alone are right in doctrine and in way of life. But their charity covers a multitude of short comings.

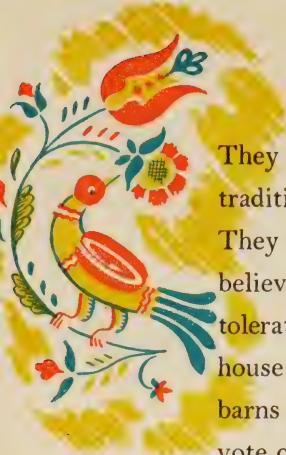


(2) The Church of the Brethren or the Dunkers are an outgrowth of the Pietistic Movement in Europe. They were organized by Alexander Mack in 1708 in Europe, and settled, through the influence of William Penn, in the vicinity of Germantown and Philadelphia. They spread rapidly throughout the south and the west, adopting the New Testament as their creed and declaring in favor of a literal observance of all the teachings of the Son of God. They observe the ordinance of feet-washing at love feast occasions, as an example of humility. They anoint the sick with oil. Members are not allowed to go to law with one of their own members, nor with others without first asking the counsel of the church. They are non-resistant as well as non-litigant. In court, they affirm. Their members will not join any oath-bound secret societies. They advocate total abstinence. No member can be installed in a church office who uses tobacco although some of them have no hesitancy in raising the forbidden weed. They have established two excellent colleges where their young people can secure a liberal education. They are notable for their extensive missionary operations and their philanthropy.

(3) Then there are the River Brethren who came to America in 1753 and located in North-Western Lancaster County near the eastern bank of the Susquehanna river. They insisted on their own method of baptism, namely, triune immersion in a river. Hence the term Brethren at the River or River Brethren.

In the year 1843 a division of the River Brethren took place from which came the branch known as the Yorkers who from the time of their organization resided in York County Pennsylvania.





They represent the older branch that held on to the primitive traditions. They object to building church structures for worship. They are strictly plain in cut and color of dress. They do not believe in Sunday Schools and until quite recently they did not tolerate the use of telephones, bicycles, automobiles and ordinary house comforts and conveniences. They hold their meetings in barns or in the large kitchen of the homestead. They refuse to vote or serve in public office. They are few in number, do not believe in higher education, and have considerable difficulty in keeping their young people on the farm.

(4) The more progressive branch that broke away from the River Brethren became known as the United Zion's Children or The Brinserites. Their founder the Rev. Mathias Brinser was born in Dauphin County Pennsylvania. He became a prominent preacher among the River Brethren. But he made the mistake of conceiving the idea of erecting a church building to accommodate his many hearers. Hitherto the meetings had been held in homesteads. When the church building—a plain one-story frame meeting house—was begun, the members of the church who resided in Lancaster County objected to the invasion upon their established practice. They warned Brinser not to build a meeting house because "it would become an open door to a great evil and would make heavy hearts for many brethren." At the age of sixty, Brinser who held the office of Bishop in the Church of the River Brethren was excommunicated "as an heathen man and a publican." This took place in Conoy township in lower Lancaster County in 1855. His followers said, "We are all children of

Zion" and organized the group known as the United Zion's Children. They erected a small frame church building near the Brinser's home and dedicated it for religious purposes only. The objectors claimed that the erection of a church building was only the manifestation of the spirit of pride. The Brinserites practice baptism by triune immersion in a flowing stream. They advocate loyalty to government, and make no restrictions on their members as to marriage. They observe the "Love Feast."

(5) How do the Amish people fit into this picture? They are beyond all doubt, the most static and conservative of all the groups of the Plain People. The early Amish settlers worshipped in private homes. They believed that to erect houses of worship showed a tendency to worldliness. On this question they split into factions. The branch which is known as the Old Order Amish still continues to worship in private homesteads. The more liberal element is known as the Church Amish because they build meeting houses for use in public worship.

#### *THE OLD ORDER AMISH*

The Old Order Amish are indeed an interesting and peculiar people. They constitute a unique phenomenon in American life. Three or four thousand of them form a rather compact rural community to the east of the city of Lancaster, Pennsylvania. Other small communities of Amishmen are scattered in various parts of the Commonwealth and in a number of other States of the Union. They settled in Virginia, Ohio, Indiana and Illinois. The total number of Old Order Amish in the United States is



less than ten thousand. More than a third of these are to be found in their original American home composing an area of about a hundred and fifty square miles, from the boundary of Chester county to the outskirts of the city of Lancaster. Most of them live in Leacock Township which is an important part of what is known as the Lancaster Limestone Plain.

In this small section of the globe the Amish live an incredibly simple and isolated life. It is like finding an island of peaceful content in the middle of a storm-tossed and bewildered world. These people have maintained a culture of their own making, unchanged for almost four hundred years, adhered to undeviatingly in this country for two hundred years. Their mode of life makes one wonder how in the wide world a small section of old sixteenth century Europe could have been transplanted bodily into a busy industrialized region of Eastern America and could have resisted in this time any cultural industrial or social pressure from without. These people are a living evidence of the effects of persecution, martyrdom and the desolation wrought by war on a long-suffering humanity. They have a distinct culture pattern which, though originally shaped by a sense of fear and despair has developed into a spirit of confidence and achievement and self satisfaction that borders on smugness.

#### *CULTURE PATTERN*

The Amish people though making humility central in their way of life are proud of their cultural heritage which consists in their way of doing things. This way of life they have preserved



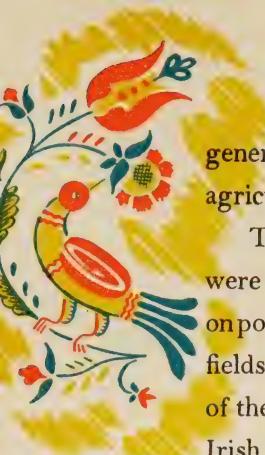


largely by oral tradition. They are almost Oriental in their fixedness of ideas, customs and institutions. Neither geography nor invention, neither pressure from without nor conflict from within have brought about any marked cultural change. Every effort at innovation has been met with obstinate resistance. Their conventional traditions, ethical standards, customs, folkways, their prevailing ideas and institutions, almost without exception were formed before the days of the Modern Industrial Revolution. They seem to be entirely oblivious of the scientific and industrial era.

The culture pattern of any people, both primitive or highly sophisticated, is known by at least five basic functions (1) Economic activites, (2) Religious rites and ceremonies, (3) Social affairs, (4) Education, including art and literature, (5) Political attitude toward the government and the State. We shall consider the Amish people from the viewpoint of these five basic functions.

#### *MASTER FARMERS*

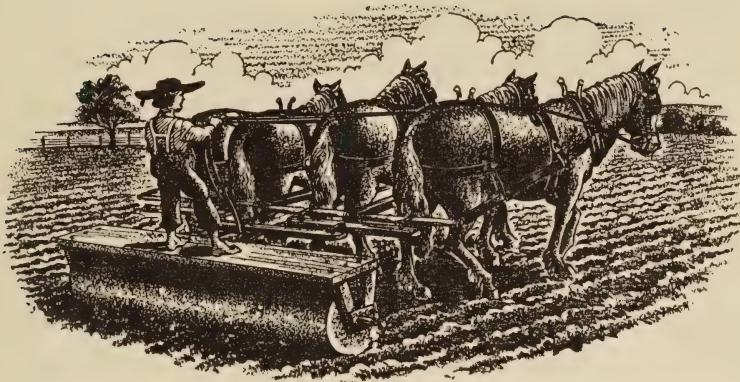
The Amish are farmers by heritage, by choice, by conviction. Their religion binds them to the land. They believe that farming is the best way of life and the one most in accord with the Scriptures. Their economic philosophy conforms to the doctrine of the eighteenth century French physiocrats, that all real wealth comes from the soil. They would agree heartily with the agrarian tenets of Benjamin Franklin and Thomas Jefferson. The Amish have proved their faith in the soil by their works. They have tilled the rich farm-lands and the fertile limestone valleys for



generations, and have made Lancaster County the foremost agricultural region in the United States.

The intensive farming methods and practices of the Amish were acquired in Europe, where frequently they had been shovved on poor soil, and were compelled to make the most of undesirable fields for purposes of survival. When they came to America many of the farms they now occupy were in the hands of the Scotch, Irish, Welsh, English and Palatines. Most of these were gradually displaced by the more successful and industrious Amish farmers who have turned a wilderness into a garden spot.

Three early waves of emigration settled in Pennsylvania, the Quakers settled in the southwest, the Swiss and German migrations lay outside of this on the north and west. The Scotch-Irish travelled through these regions and ultimately settled farther west. Some of the farms in Eastern Lancaster County, originally held by Scotch-Irish, Palatine and English settlers have since been taken over by the Amish. The Scotch-Irish were restless and moved toward the frontier. The Amish who acquired their abandoned farms, stayed and prospered.



### *AMISH FARMS*

Amish farms were originally very large, ranging from one hundred to four hundred acres. They were gradually reduced in size as farming practices became intensified. Families grew and each son was given a family-sized farm. Today the farm units average a little more than fifty acres. In one township there are now more than three hundred Amish farmers.

The land values of these farms is high. One farm of thirty acres was sold for five hundred dollars an acre. The Amish pay high prices for land in their immediate community because they want to keep their community intact. They aim at solidarity of community life. They feel that if their members are widely scattered, they cannot maintain their identity as a chosen, separate people. Besides they cannot travel far by horse and buggy.

To compensate them for the high price of land, their agriculture was enriched by the introduction of tobacco and potatoes



into their farm economy. Tobacco frequently yields two thousand pounds to the acre on an Amish farm, and the returns are high. More than ninety per cent of the tobacco grown in Pennsylvania is produced in Lancaster County. More than eighty per cent of the Amish farmers grow tobacco. There is a saying, "the Amish farmer raises more tobacco so that he can buy more steers so that he can produce more manure with which to raise more tobacco." The raising of tobacco enables the farmers to put their boys and girls to work during the winter months in stripping tobacco and preparing it for the warehouse. The tobacco is cut late in August or early in September, and hung up to dry until December. For a short time it is left on outdoor racks and is then taken into especially built sheds. These tobacco sheds are sometimes a hundred feet in length and are ventilated by hinged sidings to admit free passage of air. During the winter the whole family gathers in the sheds to strip the tobacco and to prepare the dried leaves for the warehouse. One worker will sort the plants, and another will tear the leaves from the stalk, a third will assort the leaves according to size. Then all the leaves of the same length are tied together in bundles, which are later wrapped into bales and taken to the warehouse for sweating and other processes before shipment to cigar factories. It is an interesting sight to see a long row of large Amish wagons laden with bales of tobacco wrapped in heavy paper, waiting to unload their precious cargo at the Lancaster warehouses.

The wheat crop on the Amish farms averages about twenty-eight bushels per acre. Corn produces from eighty to a hundred





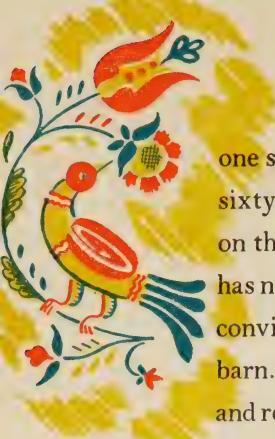
bushels. Almost all of the Amish farmers raise potatoes, averaging from two hundred and fifty to four hundred bushels to the acre. The average farmer will raise about six hundred and fifty bushels of potatoes per crop. Tomatoes and peas have become an important cash crop in more recent years.

Livestock has always been a vital part of Amish agricultural economy. Feed crops are returned to the soil. No feed crops are supposed to leave the farm. The result is that the Amish soil is as fertile as it was two hundred years ago, in spite of all the crops that have been taken from the soil. That can hardly be said of any other agricultural region in America.

Sheep raising has decreased. Pastures are becoming smaller. The raising of poultry has been intensified and specialized. Dairy farming is becoming a major operation among the Amish. Heavy horses are used for field work. Every available foot of farm land is under cultivation. A friend remarked recently, "These Amish seem to manicure their farms." The women attend to the family garden with its old-fashioned flowers, mostly red and bright blue in color. The size of the orchards is slowly decreasing in order to make way for other farming activities in which pests and blights are less troublesome and destructive to crops.

#### *FARM BUILDINGS*

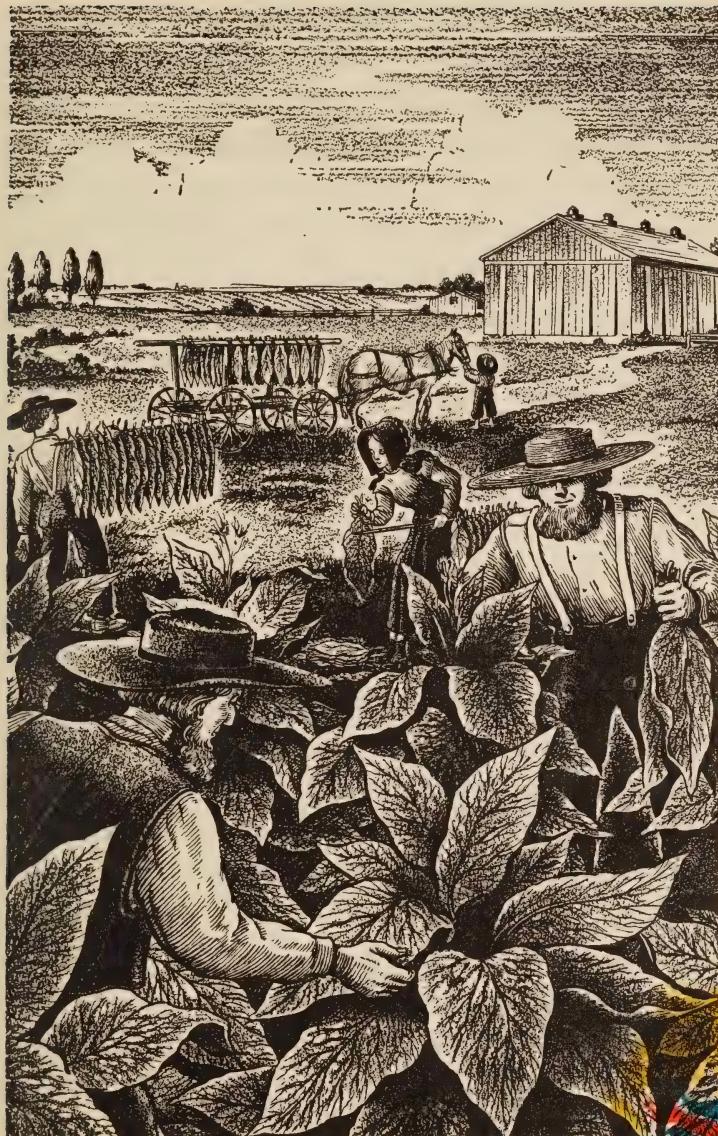
The buildings on an Amish farm are more valuable than the land. A large red barn, a commodious dwelling house and many other fine buildings associated with farming dot the Amish region. From a distance it looks like a toy village. Close at hand



one sees a barn from eighty to a hundred feet long, from fifty to sixty feet wide, fifty feet high. It is the most imposing building on the place and will have cost at least ten thousand dollars. It has no lightning rods, for they are not approved by the religious convictions of these people. The pride of the Amish farmer is his barn. He loves red barns, red cows, red apples, red brick houses and red geraniums. The barn is his workshop and the playground of his children. The cattle are comfortable in clean and well-kept stalls. The barn is usually a two or three story affair, with an earth-bank leading to the second story so as to enable the farmer to drive into the upper story with a load of hay. Then there is the overhanging section of the barn, called the 'overshot,' on the sunny side of the structure to protect the cattle. Warm winter quarters are quite essential for the stock of the Amish farmer. Since the development of dairy farming on a large scale, certain alterations have been made in the barns. This is one of the few modifications made by the Amishmen for commercial reasons.

#### *THE HOMESTEAD*

Someone has said that the thing America needs most of all is more homesteads. You have them in the Amish community. Dwelling houses with from ten to eighteen rooms are not uncommon. They are plain in style, brightly colored, surrounded by whitewashed fences, with an occasional blue gate to which the Amishman attaches no special significance, contrary to popular opinion. Rocking chairs and settees, placed on the front porch are seldom used except on visiting days.



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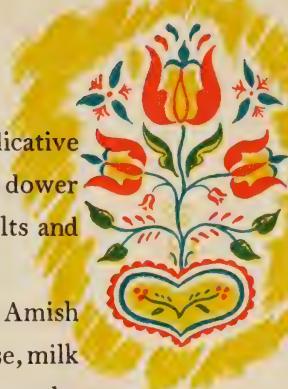
On the inside the house is immaculately clean. There are shades at the windows but no curtains. On the floor is a plain rag carpet, occasionally a hooked rug. The walls are either painted or whitewashed, but unornamental. No pictures are on the walls nor photographs. An occasional store calendar is seen in the enormous kitchen. The furniture is really antique, having come down the family line for generations.

They regard their heirlooms with satisfaction but without a sense of pride or an eye to profit. Furniture is looked upon as valuable because it is useful.

The entire first floor is purposely arranged to accommodate a hundred or more worshippers whenever a house-service of the district is to be held. In the holding of these services the families take turns. Double-doors connect the down-stairs rooms so as to turn the whole floor into a meeting house. The Old Order Amish are called "House Amish." They have no church buildings and hold all services in homes or barns.

The upstairs rooms are furnished with equal simplicity. Old bedsteads, bureaus, chairs and tables, with an occasional dower chest are all the useful articles of furniture needed. Sometimes there are several beds in one room, or in an upper hall, for the accommodation of guests. The Amish are very hospitable to their own kith and kin. There is a great deal of visiting to and fro. There are no telephones, radios, musical instruments or electric lights in the house. But they do have corner cupboards with glass doors behind which may be seen an odd collection of china and glassware. The lines of an Amish dish cupboard are simple and





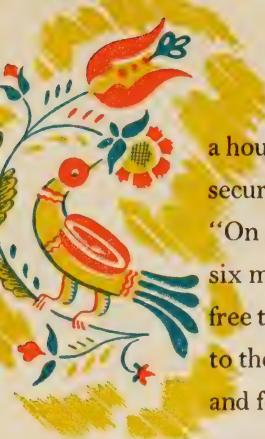
attractive. To the Amishman they are, however, more indicative of use than of beauty. Then, too, there is the daughter's dower chest filled with embroidered pillow cases, stitched quilts and hooked rugs, or samplers made by the women.

In addition to the dwelling house and the bank barn the Amish farm place has a large tobacco-shed, a silo, a chicken house, milk house and other structures, all of which, taken together, make the establishment look like a miniature village. To get the real beauty of the setting—the ensemble effect—one ought to view from an airplane the group of Amish farm buildings surrounded by well-tilled fields, and by the slow moving creeks winding through the broad fertile limestone valleys all inhabited by these master farmers who are clinging to a simple way of life.

There are no professional men among the Amish. These people are strictly rural and agricultural. Not all of them own their own farms. Some are tenant farmers, renting from relatives. Their religion forbids them in engaging in industrial activity unrelated to the farm. Some of them engage in part-time work among their own people, as blacksmiths, carpenters, painters, clock and watch repairers, furniture makers, harness makers or wagon builders. Some of them, during the fall and winter operate lime-kilns and stone quarries in their own neighborhood.

#### *AN ANECDOTE*

A brief account of an interesting personal experience may serve to illustrate a few of the Amish traits relating to their attitude toward economic activities. During the process of building



a house, I inquired of the contractor where it was possible to secure the best stone paving slabs. He replied without hesitation "On an Amish farm." "But" he added, "you must wait four or six months, until all the harvest is gathered, and the horses are free to be used in the quarry." We went to an Amish farm, spoke to the owner, examined the quarry in the middle of a large field and found that any enterprising business man might have made a good sized fortune out of that rock formation. It had large quantities of the best stone slabs to be found anywhere. But the Amishman, about forty years of age, seemed very indifferent about the quarry and its possibilities. He was interested only in the produce of his farm, in growing things. At last we secured his promise to deliver the slabs we wanted. Four months passed. Nothing happened. The harvest was gathered, fall had arrived but no slabs were forthcoming.

At long last, my builder who knew something of the Amish traits, said, "We will go to see the man's father on the adjoining farm." When we arrived there the eleven o'clock dinner bell rang. The men came from fields and barn. Among them a sturdy old Amishman, long-bearded, barefooted, came to the pump to wash in preparation for dinner. We told him our story speaking in his own dialect. The old man listened patiently to our tale of woe, reflected a moment and then asked us one question in just three words, "Did he promise?" ("Hater's versprocha?"). We answered in the affirmative, "Ja." That ended the interview and the slabs arrived in a few days. They were delivered in a large farm wagon drawn by two sturdy horses.

All of which goes to show that anything outside of the direct tilling of the soil is incidental in the Amish way of life. It means furthermore that an Amishman's promise is considered as binding as a non-Amishman's oath. One of the three tenets of Jacob Ammon, founder of the Amish faith, was that anyone guilty of speaking falsehoods deserved excommunication. An Amishman's promise never needs a signature to make it effective. His business is transacted orally and not by written agreements when dealing with the members of his own communal faith.

#### *RELIGIOUS LIFE*

The religious life and the economic activities of the Old Order Amish are closely related. The Amish are farmers because they believe that life on the soil conforms to Biblical standards. God made the earth and told man to multiply and subdue the earth. The Amishman says, "You cannot do that in the city. The city is proud and worldly. God made the country but the devil made the city. The evils of Biblical times were wrought in cities from the days of Sodom to the sorrowful events of Jerusalem and Rome." According to the Amish theory of life, a strictly rural community is essential for the survival of his religion.

Religion to the Amish means that they are God's chosen and peculiar people. Therefore they must live separate from the world in the spirit of non-conformity. This accounts for many of their unusual practices and customs. They must not associate more than is absolutely necessary or be unequally yoked with unbelievers which means any people of the outside world who are

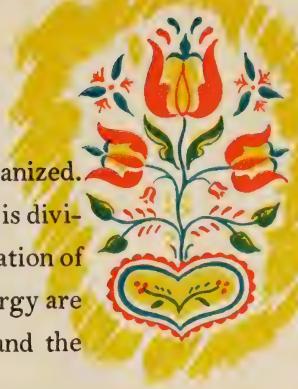


non-Amish, or who hold different religious opinions. Their basic virtues consist in maintaining the old order of life, separation from the world, non-conformity to the practices and customs of the world, avoidance of the unequal yoke, non-resistance and the enforcement of discipline among themselves. They believe that leisure and pride are the devil's own imps. If a man does not work hard, he ought not to eat. Work and prayer constitute their religion. Their life is regimented by endless rules and regulations, taboos and prohibitions, all of which are intended to give cohesiveness to their community life. To disregard these regulations means discipline, shunning or excommunication.

#### *REGULATIONS*

What are some of the taboos, the infraction of which is held to be sinful. Among them are the following prohibitions: owning an automobile; driving an automobile; riding in an automobile for pleasure; attending a movie; owning a radio or any musical instrument; patronizing a tavern or liquor store; smoking cigarettes or a pipe; attending a fair; owning or riding a bicycle; gambling in any form; playing cards or base ball; having one's photograph taken; cursing or telling questionable stories; reading non-Biblical books; cutting hair too short, for men; parting the hair on the side for men and women; dashboard or whip-socket on a vehicle; the use of rubber tires on a vehicle; the wearing of jewelry. All these and many other every-day features of modern social life are regarded as sinful by the Amish and therefore requiring discipline or admonition.





### SELECTION BY LOT

The congregational life of the Amish is definitely organized. The Old Order Amish community in Lancaster County is divided into eighteen districts in each of which is a congregation of approximately one hundred baptized members. The clergy are divided into three orders, the Bishop, the Preacher and the Deacon. None of these receive any salary.

The Amish Bishops are men of authority. When gathered together for conference they remind one of patriarchs or apostles. I once met with a group of eight Bishops of the Amish Church in a large kitchen of an Amish homestead, and I was greatly impressed with their dignity, courtesy, quiet demeanor and firm strong faces. They reminded me of some of the bearded characters in Michael Angelo's murals. There is one Bishop for every two districts. He baptizes members, receives them into the church, disciplines them, if necessary. He administers the holy communion, performs marriage ceremonies, supervises the selection of ministers by lot and ordains them after they have been chosen in Scriptural fashion.

Each congregation may have two preachers who assist in the communion service and deliver impromptu sermons with a peculiar pulpit intonation, with a high pitch at the end of each phrase or sentence. Scripture passages are quoted in Biblical High German, but the running comments and practical applications are made in the distinctively Amish dialect which differs little from the Pennsylvania Dutch frequently heard in Lancaster, York, Lebanon, Berks and adjoining counties.



The deacon as his name Armen Diener indicates, looks after the material affairs of the congregation, receives the money for charities and makes a proper distribution of the funds contributed for the needy, the orphan and the aged. He also reads the Scripture Lesson at the fortnightly service from a German Bible, Luther's Version; pours the water for baptism and provides the bread and wine for communion. He is also a sort of 'go-between' for young people who want to get married, a sort of matrimonial diplomat who secretly ascertains whether prospective brides and grooms are acceptable to each others parents and in-laws. All this is supposed to be done before the bans are published.

The congregational officers are always selected by lot. The mode of procedure is based on the Scriptural example in the Book of "The Acts of the Apostles" where it is recorded that the Apostle Matthias was chosen by lot to replace Judas. In case of a vacancy all members of the congregation, male and female vote for any male member. This serves the purposes of a nomination. Whoever receives three votes has his name entered for choice by lot. When the day for final selection arrives, as many Bibles of same size and binding are laid on the table as there are candidates in the lot. An appropriate Scripture verse on a slip of paper has been placed in one of the Bibles. The men who are in the lot walk up to the table and around it, each selecting one of the Bibles. The Bishop opens the Bibles one after the other with solemn deliberation. The atmosphere is quite tense as one can well imagine, when he finds the slip of paper and solemnly declares the holder to have been chosen of God for the

sacred office. Thereupon the successful candidate is ordained to the office to which he has thus been providentially selected. As a wise man of old said; "The lot is cast into the lap; but the whole disposing thereof is of the Lord."

While apparently the congregations are independent in their church polity, the Bishops actually determine the general policy and many of the specific regulations of the church. They are a sort of supreme court with final authority.

#### *THE DISCIPLINE OF 1809*

The following rules were formulated and signed by the Amish ministers at a conference held in Pennsylvania in 1809. They are articles of agreement for the Amish congregations.

*First:* That all those of our members who leave us to join other churches shall be treated as apostate persons according to the word of the Lord and his ordinance, and shall be separated and shall be recognized as subjects for the ban.

*Second:* Permission shall be given to 'admonish' at a funeral in our brotherhood, but not outside.

*Third:* We have no basis in Scripture for excluding any member from taking part in the council of the church.

*Fourth:* That shunning shall be exercised toward banned persons according to the teaching of Christ and the apostles with respect to eating and drinking, life and work until they are again received by the church.

*Fifth:* Anyone who transgresses the rule of shunning in weakness or ignorance can be reconciled by confession to the church



that he erred; whoever transgresses intentionally but is not stubborn about it when admonished, can be reconciled by a complete confession but whoever stubbornly refuses to hearken to this admonition shall be excommunicated from the church.

*Sixth:* Whoever swears an oath knowingly and frivolously shall be excommunicated; but whoever swears out of inexperience shall be required to make a full confession.

*Seventh:* In regard to cutting of the hair and beard, it is decided that no one shall be accepted as a member in the church unless he manifests the full fruit of obedience, and all those who are already in the church and are not willing to be obedient shall be dealt with according to Christian discipline.

*Eighth:* It is decided that jury service shall not be tolerated or permitted for brethren in the church.

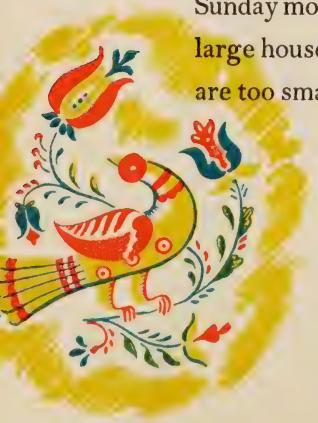
*Ninth:* Proud dresses, proud trousers, hats, and combs in the hair and similar worldly clothing shall not be tolerated.

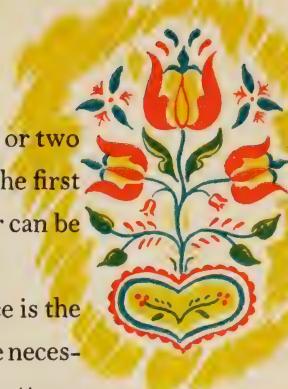
All the above articles shall be observed and practiced according to Christian discipline and patience."

The above translation from the German was made by Harold S. Bender, in the Mennonite Quarterly Review.

#### *RELIGIOUS SERVICES*

Religion has first place in Amish life. Services of worship are held in each Amish district every two weeks and on alternate Sunday mornings. The services are held during the winter in the large houses of the members, and during the summer, if houses are too small, the services may be held in the larger barn. Some





of the houses are able to accomodate a hundred and fifty or two hundred at a service. The large double doors between the first floor rooms are opened or removed, so that the speaker can be heard by everybody in the house.

To entertain the worshippers at a fortnightly service is the event of the year for a household. Great preparations are necessary for the occasion. The house is cleaned from top to bottom; the floors are scrubbed; the walls are painted; the cellar is white-washed; the pots and pans are polished; stoves are blackened; dishes and kitchen wares are properly arranged.

Before the meeting begins wooden benches without backs are placed in the rooms to accommodate the many worshippers. Meanwhile the women of the family are busy baking bread and snitzpie, preparing pickles and beets, apple-butter and cold cuts to be consumed by the congregation at the close of the service.

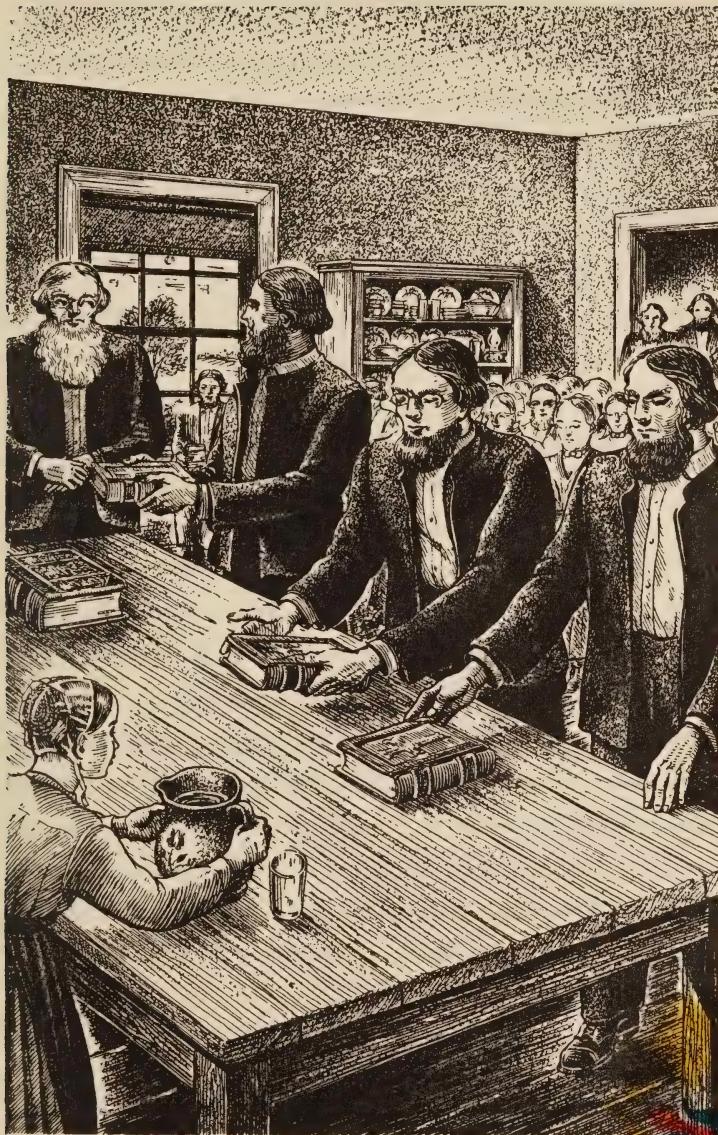
On the prescribed Sunday morning gray-top box carriages and open buggies may be seen by the score moving along the highway, then up the lane to the barn or shed where the horses may be unhitched by young hostlers and all the wagons properly arranged. Somtimes the horses remain in harness and are tied to fence posts or railings, but usually they are blanketed and stabled, especially in inclement weather. The line of horses and buggies on the highway on Sunday morning is often the despair of some impatient motorist who happens to meet the church procession slowly jogging along, apparently oblivious of the fact that such implements of Satan as automobiles actually exist. There are few Amish pedestrians on Sunday morning.



The House-Service begins at eight o'clock and lasts from three to four hours. The men and women are seated in separate rooms. In the larger room in the centre of the house, there are two groups of men seated on benches, facing each other. Between these groups are several chairs for the Bishop, the preacher and the deacon. The men wear their broad-brim hats until shortly before the service begins. The women wear their appropriate head covering known as a prayer veil.

The service opens with the singing of a German hymn during which the church officers retire to another room for consultation. They decide who is to preach the short sermon and who is to deliver the long sermon. The officers return during the singing of a second hymn which is usually a song of praise and thanksgiving. The hymns are taken from a book known as the *Ausbund* which is reputed to be the oldest hymn book in use in America. Many of the hymns were composed in the sixteenth century by the religious martyrs of the Anabaptist faith. Since no musical instruments are permitted in Amish houses, the hymns are announced and led by a song-leader who sets the pitch and the slow motion of the plaintive chant. The unaccompanied singing partakes of the nature of a Gregorian chant or Plain-song. No part-singing is permitted. That would be an evidence of pride.

The first sermon of the morning is known as the short sermon because it lasts only a half hour. No notes are ever used by the preacher and no special preparation is required. He is entitled to speak as the spirit gives him utterance. This results in considerable repetition. After he has finished his discourse



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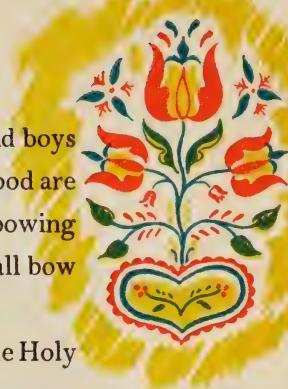


the whole congregation kneels in silent prayer, after which a chapter from Luther's German translation of the New Testament is read by the deacon, while the congregation stands in reverence for the Word of God.

Then comes the crowning event of the day, the long sermon lasting from an hour to an hour and a half. This long discourse consists largely of the application of Bible stories to church regulations, or in recounting the shortcomings and sins of the world and in appealing to the young people to keep themselves unspotted from the world and in conformity with the traditions and way of life of their fathers. After the long sermon is finished several witnesses are called upon to bear testimony of their own convictions and to give encouragement or warning to the younger members of the community. Then the congregation kneels, and the preacher kneels, and then he reads a liturgical prayer from an Amish prayer book entitled "Christian Duty." During the benediction which follows an interesting and rather surprising feature of the service is the genuflection, the bending of the knee at the mention of the name of Jesus. The deacon then announces the time and place of the next service, and reads the names of those who intend to get married. If disciplinary action is to be taken, the congregation remains seated and all non-members or unbaptized persons leave the meeting at the close of the final hymn.

The noon meal is served to the whole congregation after the formal religious worship is finished. The young unmarried women help to serve the food. The benches are removed and two



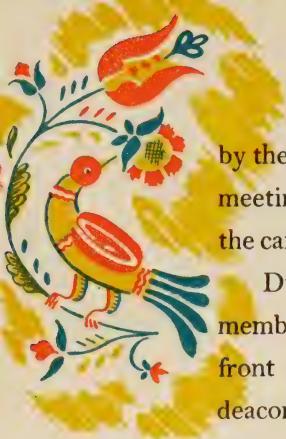


long tables are prepared, one to be used by the men and boys the other by the women and girls. Bowls and plates of food are placed on the tables and everybody helps himself, after bowing the head in silent prayer. At the close of the meal they all bow again in reverent devotion and thanksgiving.

Twice in a year the Amish congregations observe the Holy Communion. These services are preceded by a Fast Day or a Day of Special prayer. The Communion Service is longer than the ordinary service. There is one service in the morning and another in the afternoon. The Communion itself is celebrated at about three o'clock, the traditional hour of the death of Christ.

After the communion, the minister reads the Biblical account of the washing of the disciples feet by their Master. Then the deacon and the hostess bring in pails of water. While the congregation sings a hymn from the *Ausbund*, the members in pairs wash each others feet. Then they give each other the right hand of Christian fellowship, kiss each other and say: "God bless you" or "Peace be with you."

The Amish people bring their children along with them to the worship services. They have no Sunday Schools. They find no mention of Sunday Schools in the Bible. There is no regular religious instruction of youth except in the home. The boys and girls are taught German so that they can read the Bible, the "Martyr's Mirror" and the prayer book on "Christian Duty," as well as hymns from the *Ausbund*. When the time comes for their admittance to the church of their fathers, the Amish boys and girls are instructed in the rules and regulations of the church



by the minister. After this the baptism takes place. At a special meeting of the congregation held before the baptismal ceremony the candidates are approved.

During the baptismal ceremony the candidates for church membership are seated on benches, the young men sitting in front of the women. After a sermon and an admonition, the deacon brings in a bucket filled with water and pours out of a cup a generous portion on the head of each of the baptismal candidates. This is done three times, while the candidate kneels. Then he rises and is given the right hand of fellowship and the holy kiss by the Bishop. When women are baptized, the Bishop's wife removes the head covering from the candidate's head before the baptismal ceremony and later replaces it. Then follows a rather touching rite. After the Bishop has raised the newly baptized woman to her feet, he places her hand into the right hand of his wife who greets her with the salutation of the holy kiss.

In the Epistles of St. Paul there is frequent admonition to the brethren to greet one another with an holy kiss. This custom is still observed among the Amish and the Dunkers. One observer thus describes the custom. "A Bishop's assistant stood up, shook hands with the sister upon his left at the table and kissed the brother upon his right, and from brother to brother and from sister to sister the kiss went around the congregation. The last sister who has no one to kiss, goes forward and kisses the first one, thus completing the chain of unity."



### *SHUNNING*

The Amishman believes in rigid discipline. His is no soft and pliable religion. Rules and regulations must be strictly observed. There are taboos that must be recognized. A member of the community guilty of a major sin or minor fault is brought before the congregation. If the transgression is not of a serious nature, he may plead guilty, profess penitence and be restored to the fellowship. If he persists in wrong doing he will suffer the ban of excommunication. Minor faults may consist in breaking a regulation of the church by driving an automobile, smoking cigarettes, wearing jewelery, having a picture taken or attending a movie, a county fair or a base-ball game. Unless the guilty confess and repent of their faults, they are forbidden to receive the Holy Communion.

If a member is guilty of breaking the moral law or violates without confession and penitence the ordinances of the Church



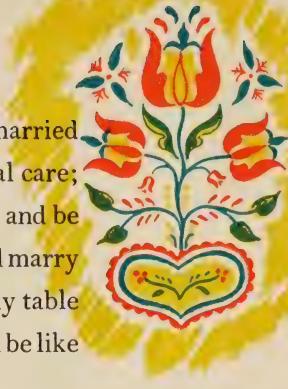
or leaves the Amish Church and unites with another church, he is forthwith excommunicated. Then the members are obliged to 'shun' him as a child of the devil. This is the extreme penalty.

The practice of shunning means that they are not permitted to eat at the same table with the other members of the family. They are not to engage with them in conversation. Husband and wife cannot continue marital and conjugal relations though they may live under the same roof. Members cannot buy or receive anything from the shunned. This may seem harsh, but it is the essence of the Amish way of life. It was laxity of discipline that led Jacob Ammon to found the Amish church. If a member is shunned in one congregation he suffers the same fate in every other Amish congregation so long as he remains under the ban.

One of my former college students, Dr. Calvin G. Bachman who has made an authoritative study of the Old Order Amish relates an incident which shows the extreme application of this idea of shunning. He says in one of his publications issued by the Pennsylvania German Society:

"How serious the matter of shunning is regarded among the Amish will be illustrated in an incident which occurred a number of years ago. The daughter of an Old Order Amish family gave birth to an illegitimate child. The father of the child, who was a member of a non-Amish church, was willing to marry the girl but would not agree to become a member of the Amish church. As a result, the parents refused to give their consent to the marriage of their Amish daughter to one not of the faith. Their preference was to have their daughter, who could again be re-



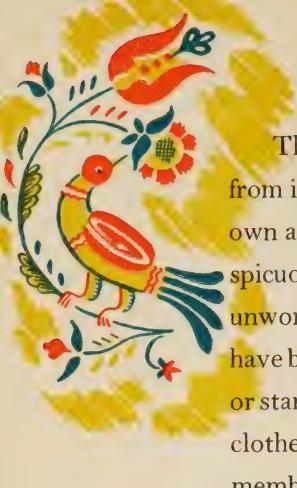


instituted in the church after a certain period remain an unmarried mother, and to let the child grow up without bi-parental care; rather than have the daughter marry outside the church, and be subject to the extreme penalty of the church. If she should marry the child's father, she would be unable to sit at the family table when she came home and her relation to her family would be like that of a stranger."

Of course, restoration of the guilty is hoped for in these disciplinary measures, and usually occurs. For where is a shunned Amishman to go? The world is foreign to him and his way of life would make him practically a stranger in a strange land. So, back he goes and is re-instated at a public ceremony which concludes with the hand of fellowship and the holy kiss.

#### *APPEARANCE AND GARB*

The conservatism of the Amish manifests itself in their personal appearance and their manner of dress. A consideration of the way they look and dress may be of help in understanding their social life. Nothing attracts the attention of a visitor to Lancaster City or to the towns and villages in the eastern part of the County, more quickly than the sight of an Amish group. Their uniformity of apparel at once makes them the center of a stranger's attention. It seems like turning the clock back a few hundred years or like taking a trip to some remote corner of the Old World where people hardly knew there had been a World War. It is most astonishing to see quite small children dressed in garments like those of old persons.



These people do not want to attract attention. They shrink from it. They are shy, self-centered, attending strictly to their own affairs. They believe that pride manifests itself most conspicuously in bodily adornment, and therefore in order to be unworldly, which to them means to be unlike other people, they have brought with them from Europe and adopted a certain form or standard of dress which they believe should not change. Their clothes are mostly home-made and cut the same way for all the members of the family young or old.

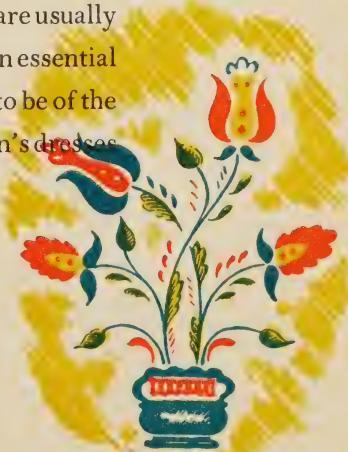
They are not as a rule, impressive looking, though there are notable exceptions, especially among the Bishops. The fear of persecution and the martyr-spirit has not altogether died out of the eyes and faces of the people. They have suffered.

Every man as soon as he is old enough to join the church or to get married is required to wear a beard. He is not permitted to have a mustache even with a beard, and much less to wear a mustache alone. A mustache would interfere with the holy kiss and, besides, it is associated with the military profession since the sixteenth century feudal and religious wars.

The men wear their hair long. There is no part; the hair is combed down straight over their heads, and is cut off in front in "bangs." In the rear of the head, the hair is cut 'crock-fashion' on a line parallel with the lower part of their ears, from ear to ear. The women part their hair in the middle, combed down flat. No bobbed hair and no curling irons are permitted. Very young girls may have their hair braided. All the girls have identical hairdress to distinguish them from the 'world's people.'

The men wear low-crowned, broad brimmed black hats. In summer straw hats, some of them home-made are of similar style. Neckties are a badge of Satanic worldliness and therefore taboo. Mens coats have no collars or lapels or outside pockets. Home-made suspenders are allowed. Coats and vests have no buttons. Buttons are forbidden because they were usually worn by military men. Therefore the Amishman uses hooks and eyes on his coat and vest, although he needs an occasional button for his shirt and pants. Men's trousers are called 'front-fall' and open at the sides instead of in front. Overcoats have heavy caps to match. Shirts may have plain but not mixed colors. The style never changes. Clothing are never out of date and are kept until worn out. There are no Amish rummage sales. The outer clothes are usually made at home.

The women wear a shaker type of bonnet, large and plain gray or black. The prayer covering that the sisters wear is a white cap made of muslin or organdie and is tied under the chin. The younger girls wear the white cap from early childhood until they are about sixteen years of age. Then they change to wearing the black cap until their marriage when they change again to the white cap. The dresses of the Amish women are of plain color with a cape over the shoulders. There is no objection to different colors as long as they are unmixed. Nothing flowery or striped or plaid is allowed. The colors of the women's dresses are usually purple, blue, green or magenta. An apron is always an essential article of Amish female attire. The dress is supposed to be of the same color throughout. There are no buttons on women's dresses.

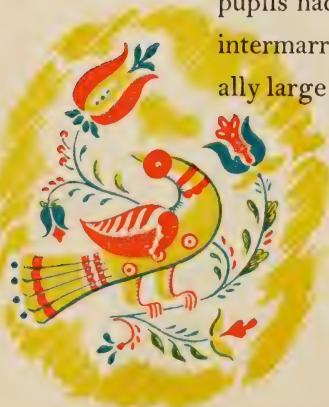


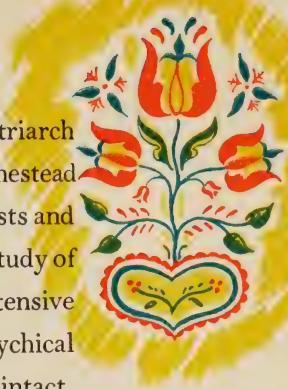
only hook and eyes and pins. No short skirts, for the dresses must cover the ankles. Some of the older women wear shawls. At the worship service the unmarried girls wear a white cape, a white apron and a black cap; the married women wear a black or dark blue cape, a black apron and a white cap.

The children are replicas of their parents. They are clothed in the exact manner, style and cut of clothes and hair as the adults. Boys dress like men. They wear long trousers, purple colored shirts and the same style of hats as their fathers have worn for generations. The smallest children always wear long dresses. Baby girls have bonnets and head coverings. As soon as they can walk they wear colored bonnets and an apron reaching up to the neck, covering the whole front of the dress. The dark-eyed, sweet little face of an Amish child, with muslin cap and plain gown is very attractive and will not soon be forgotten.

#### *AN AMISH FAMILY*

An Amishman's attachment to the land and to his God is equalled only by his attachment to his family. Amish family life is closely knit socially as well as economically and religiously. Actually there are not many distinct families in the Amish community. There are only about thirty different family names. The vast majority of Amishmen have one of the names of a dozen different families. In one little red school house almost all the pupils had one Amish family name, Stoltzfus. The very close intermarriage of these few families has produced an exceptionally large 'Freundschaft,' relatives, cousins, aunts, children and



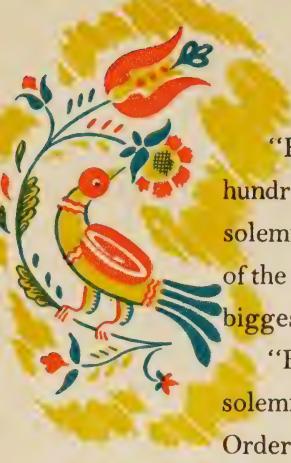


grandchildren without end. The grandfather is a sort of patriarch in the family and occupies his own choice quarters in the homestead after the sons take over the operation of the farm. Biologists and students of heredity have been greatly interested in the study of the biological and the psychological outcome of such an extensive and continuous inbreeding. It has had its physical and psychical effects without a doubt but it has kept the Amish family intact. There are no divorces in Amish history and few separations.

#### *AN AMISH WEDDING*

When an Amish young couple decides to get married the church deacon quietly secures the approval of the parents. If they are favorable to the proposition the deacon publishes the bans at a service a few weeks prior to the wedding. Guests are invited personally. Frequently the whole congregation attends. Weddings take place in the fall of the year on a Tuesday or a Thursday in November after the harvest work is done, and there is a lull before the work of the winter sets in. Amish weddings are usually a matter of large gatherings of relatives and friends. The wedding ceremony is solemn. But there is a great deal of joviality and frivolity afterwards, eating, drinking and feasting. It is a time when the Amishman really relaxes and becomes human.

A description of an Amish wedding as witnessed by a reporter was printed in the Lancaster Daily Intelligencer on November sixteenth, nineteen hundred and thirty four. In order to give the reader an accurate picture of an Amish wedding, we reproduce a part of the article, omitting the names of the persons involved.



“High noon neared and a solemn hush fell upon the two hundred and fifty relatives and guests assembled to witness a solemn wedding ceremony. To the nineteen year old daughter of the household the great moment of her life had arrived—the biggest event in the life of any Amish girl.

“Four Bishops, a preacher and a deacon took part in the solemn proceedings. It was a typical all-day ceremony of the Old Order of House Amish. It began early Tuesday morning and was concluded after midnight on Wednesday.

“The Amish wedding season usually begins about November first and runs to Christmas. It is as good a time as any to marry, the elders point out; because the crops are in the barn, farm work eases, and a wedding fits in well with harvest festivals of thanksgiving.

“Before daybreak teams begin to drive into the farmyard. Hostlers are there to unhitch the teams and care for the horses throughout the day.

“The house was crowded by eight-thirty o’clock and the services began with forty-five minutes of singing by the congregation. An outsider might have mistaken the wedding ceremony for a funeral, so solemn is the spirit of the occasion. It is an axiom that at a marriage ceremony the mother of the bride always weeps; but at an Amish wedding, practically everybody weeps including the preachers. But there is a beauty and dignity and simplicity in the service that is unforgettable—an impressiveness and seriousness which helps one to understand why Amish couples remain married unto death.

"All present wanted to see everything if possible. To accommodate the greatest number, the preachers spoke in the doorway between two large rooms. Seated on long benches without backs the audience listened gravely. The men and the women are segregated. All the women, and even infants in arms, wore the traditional white caps, except the bride and her female attendants. She wore a black cap, as the custom is for the first time in her life, and will never wear it again.

"The ceremony itself lasted more than three and one-half hours. After the singing, the uncle of the bride preached until ten o'clock. A silent prayer followed, everybody kneeling. Then the deacon read an impressive passage from the Scriptures. The Bishop took up the discourse shortly after ten o'clock and preached until about eleven-thirty, when the couple to be married, seated near-by, were summoned to stand up and answer the fateful questions. He placed their hands together and pronounced them man and wife. After that brief and appropriate remarks followed by other clerics present, without rising."

Then comes the real celebration of the day.

#### *WEDDING FEAST*

"The serious mood of the morning now gave way to cheerfulness in the afternoon and gaiety in the evening. Shortly after noon, many helping hands cleared away the benches, and in a very short time the tables were ready for the wedding feast.

"Now, two hundred and fifty people can eat a lot of food, but there was enough for all and to spare. Twenty-two ducks, a



number of geese and chickens, a multitude of cakes, pies, cookies, meats and other viands were provided.

“Tables were set in several rooms to expedite the feast. ‘Have you eaten yet?’ and if so, ‘Did you get enough?’ or ‘Do you want to eat again?’ were asked again and again as they set before the guests the best food to be had in heaven-blessed Lancaster County.”

Another newspaper account of an Amish wedding feast says “The wedding festivities lasted until after one o’clock on the following day. The banquet included five geese, twelve ducks twelve chickens, seventy pies, forty loaves of bread, fourteen cakes three layers high, two bushels of potato chips, one and one half bushel of mashed potatoes, other things too numerous to mention. Twenty stewed chickens were served for supper.” The writer forgot to mention ‘seven sweets and seven sours.’ He might have added cider and countless pumpkin pies.

It seems to be no trouble at all because every body helps. An Amish wedding feast is a sort of cooperative affair. But the day is not done with the noon banquet. Our narrator continues by saying: “After the dinner a long table was set in the largest room in the house. About seventy of the younger couples sat around this, which was covered with a light luncheon, while the elders crowded close behind, and the entire afternoon was spent in singing hymns. Extra tables were set at night so that everyone could have supper. Until after midnight the younger element held sway, singing or eating as their choice dictated. The elders sat apart and discussed crops, church and neighborhood affairs.”



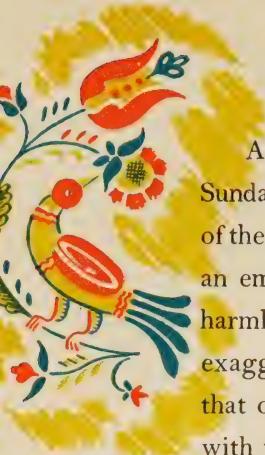


According to custom the groom must be thrown over a fence—any fence will do—in order to be completely married. This is a popular diversion at Amish weddings and always attracts a great deal of enthusiasm. There are no wedding rings, no bridal bouquets or veils, no photographs of the happy couple at an Amish wedding. These things are too worldly and do not fit the pattern. Honeymoon trips usually consist in visiting all of the relatives in the neighborhood throughout the winter.

#### *YOUTH PROBLEMS*

Amish leaders are greatly concerned about maintaining their old order and peculiar way of life. They know that if their agricultural supremacy and religious integrity are to be perpetuated they must keep their 'teen-age' boys and girls free from the dreaded contaminations of modern social life. This creates for them a serious youth problem. The boys and girls will go to the neighboring village or town and are tempted to violate the strict rules and regulations of their fathers. This problem is especially vital in the post-adolescent period. For about that time even an Amish youth begins to "feel his oats."

As soon as a young man reaches the courting age he is furnished with a good driving horse, a brand new harness and a shining open buggy. Naturally he takes to the road. On Sunday evening he drives his best girl to the 'singing' and late at night drives her back to her home. If he meets another Amish open buggy the two young fellows and their friends are most likely to test the racing qualities of their horses.



As many as a hundred buggies are gathered together on a Sunday evening in a neighboring village. Quite recently a group of these young Amish swains got into trouble which gave them an embarrassing amount of publicity. Their offense, though harmless enough and quite natural to normal youth was greatly exaggerated and widely publicized by press and radio. It appears that on Sunday evenings these young Amishmen congregate with their horses and buggies in the vicinity of the village of Intercourse, where the old Philadelphia Pike and the Gap road intersect. This intersection forms a long triangle around which the races take place. Meanwhile the girls are on the lawn cheering for their favorite charioteer. It is a modern impromptu Amish version of a tournament. However, on one fatal evening, egg throwing was engaged in, and a spirit of rowdyism developed. To the dismay of the young revellers a State policeman came along and arrested four of the culprits. He testified that: "All of a sudden they started to drive around the triangle. It seemed like a relay race or a merry-go-round, as they drove around and around. I started to cross the highway and was nearly run down by one of the youthful drivers. The Amish girls would scream, and, all in all, the driving and the noise was a disorder." At their hearing before an Alderman the chief concern of the four ring-leaders who sat abashed, dejected, with hat in hand, was as to what action the Bishop might take in the matter. The boys paid their fines from well-filled wallets and promised never to return to Intercourse again on a Sunday night. By the time, this affair so natural if one understands the spirit of youth, reached the

metropolitan news area, it was described in terms of a beer party and a strip-tease. Reputable non-Amish residents of the village however, will assure you that there was absolutely no truth in the garbled version of the young Amishmen's fling.

Another quite recent incident relates to the astounding fact that two Amish youths tired of farming, enlisted in the army contrary to the tenets of their father's faith. They volunteered for eighteen months at a local recruiting station, after having hitch-hiked to Lancaster, getting their hair cut and spending the night on a bench in the railroad depot.

In the face of all rules and regulations young Amishmen occasionally do go wild in the estimation of their forbears. A few have procured drivers licenses; several are known to have bought a second-hand radio and hidden it in their buggy. They look very cautious and guilty when seen smoking a cigarette, or entering a movie or a tavern. Somehow youth will be served.

To what extent the Amish youth engage in more questionable practices it is impossible to ascertain. Almost every treatise on Amish customs refers to the pioneer practice of courting in rural communities, known as bundling. It is historically certain that the practice existed in colonial days. That it had not gone out of existence a hundred years ago is known through the fact that it was condemned by the rules of the church. If it had not been a threatening evil in the Amish community, the Discipline of 1837 would not have issued the warning that "with regards to the excesses practiced among the youth, namely that the youth take the liberty to sleep or lie together without any fear or shame,





such things shall not be tolerated at all. And when it takes place with the knowledge of the parents and something bad happens on account of it, the parents shall not go unpunished." There actually was a church-split on this subject, the western congregations having higher social standards than the eastern.

One of the foremost historians of the Mennonite Church, Dr. C. Henry Smith of Goshen College wrote: "While in general the Old Order Amish are still sound morally, they are addicted to certain social practices and moral ideals that are not wholesome. Among these are their courting customs, which resemble in some respects the old New England custom of bundling, and the results of which are often no less unfortunate." While these questionable customs may have prevailed in the past, the law of the church is against them and the Bishops say, "they have no need to resort to such means to marry off their young people."

Amish parents doubtless find it harder to control their young folks than was the case in earlier days. On the whole however the morals of the Amish people are just as high as those of any of their more sophisticated city neighbors.

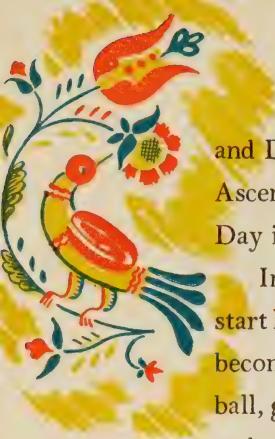


### HOLIDAYS

The Amish are not interested in the celebration of national holidays. On the Fourth of July they are in the harvest field while our more patriotically inclined citizens are on the golf-links and in the swimming pool. On Labor Day the Amish really work, cutting tobacco and digging potatoes. They do observe the Church Festivals in a quiet way. On the day after a Church Festival, Easter Monday or Whit Monday, they usually go visiting.

There is no special observance of Christmas. A few adults may attend a Christmas program in school. There is no Santa Claus, no decoration, no Christmas tree lighted with candles. Good Friday and Easter Sunday are observed with most rigid solemnity. Ascension day is held sacred. If they work or sew on that day, their house may be struck by lightning. An egg laid on Ascension Day if placed in the roof of a house wards off lightning, flood or any other calamity. When Ascension Day





and Decoration Day fall on the same date, the Amish observe Ascension Day but disregard Memorial Day. Thanksgiving Day is beginning to be observed by them.

In the spring of the year the Amish young folks who are to start housekeeping, attend public sales. The day of a sale really becomes a sort of holiday for old and young. Boys play corner-ball, girls play bean-bag, and the old folks talk about the crops and occasionally offer a bid on an article that is offered for sale.

Market day in Lancaster is another institution that brings these people together in groups. They come to sell and to visit. The market brings them into commercial contact with city folk as well as with their own people. These markets are supplied with a staggering abundance of poultry, perfectly dressed; fruits of every variety; ball cheese and half a dozen other cheeses; shoo-fly pie and a dozen other kinds of pastry; honey in the comb or liquid in clear glass jars; bread in huge loaves baked before dawn on the same day; pickles, sweet and sour; pumpkins and gourds; hams, sausages and scrapple. Stalls are piled high. A parade of wicker baskets passes leisurely up and down the aisles all day long. The produce of the Amishman goes first to feed his family and his livestock. If any is left over, he takes it to market.

### *SCHOOLS*

The Amish do not educate their children beyond the eighth grade. They feel that this is all the book learning that a good farmer needs. They send their children to schools of their own to avoid contaminating contacts. Their theory is that if children

are to be kept on the farm they must be limited in schooling. Of course children must learn to read German so that they can join in the singing of hymns and in the study of the Bible. Another reason why the Amish are opposed to having their children enter high school is because they need them on the farm after the age of fourteen or fifteen. They are afraid that a high school education might put ideas of leisure into their head. An Amish boy who would want to go to college would have to break with religion, tradition and family. Amish boys must not enter the professions or the white collar class. This is not due to prejudice against professions as such. While the Amish do not send their sons to professional schools, they do engage the services of the best surgeons, physicians, oculists and dentists. They have no objections to other non-Amish people entering a learned profession, but their own boys and girls must remain on the land if the old order of their fore-fathers is to survive. The fear of making their children 'lazy' forbids sending them away to school.

A few years ago they sent a petition to the Pennsylvania State Assembly to the effect that, "throughout time we have chosen and do yet choose to be a farming people. Farming is one of the best tenets of our Religion. We wish to have our children educated by the best available means including Scripture in the home and church, three R's in school and actual experienced training under parental supervision, at home and on the farm."

Then they requested that their children be given the special consideration of attending school only one hundred and sixty days a year, and that their children be granted exemption from

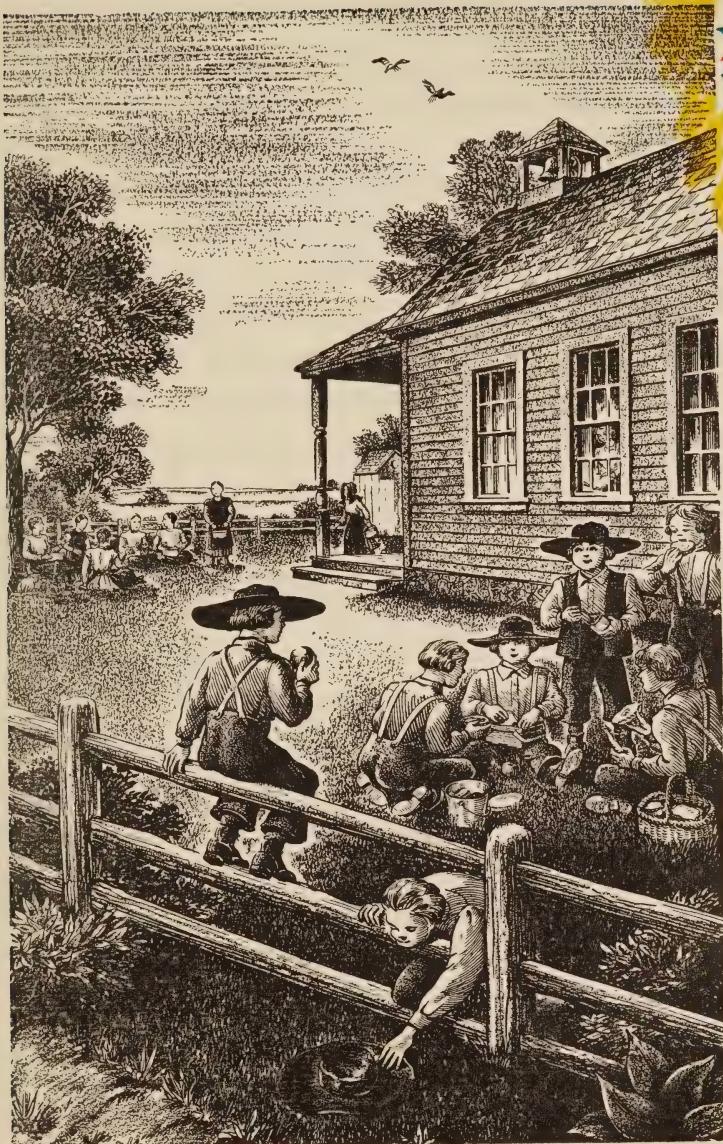


attending school upon completion of primary studies of the elementary grades or after attaining the age of fourteen years. In case consolidated schools were established where their children had to mingle with non-Amish children and be conveyed to school by bus-transportation, the Amish asked for the privilege of establishing their own independent schools. When a consolidated school project was undertaken the Amish put up a fight. They sent a Committee to interview the President of the United States in 1936, protesting a P. W. A. grant of \$56,250 for the purpose of erecting a new consolidated school house in the heart of the Amish district. The Amish did not want Federal aid and they did not want the new school. Neither did they want their children to get used to riding in a school bus. Walking to school was good enough for them. The Amish went to court—a very unusual proceeding for them—to stop the construction of the school. When the consolidated school was built over the protest of the Amish at the polls and in court, they bought three one-room school buildings and started parochial schools of their own. They pay their taxes and in addition support their own schools in return for which they ask nothing but to be let alone. The Amish parochial schools have attracted wide attention.

#### *LANGUAGE*

The Amish people speak a great deal among themselves but very little to strangers. Their language is in some respects unique. In the magazine "American Speech," issue of April 1945 Dr. J. Wm. Frey of Franklin and Marshall College has published







an illuminating article entitled "Amish Triple-Talk." His contention is that Amish speech is tri-lingual, or rather a mixture of Amish Pennsylvania Dutch, Amish High German and Pennsylvania Dutch English. He says: "The Amish Pennsylvania Dutch is typical of the whole region of dialects found in Lancaster and York Counties as opposed to the dialect of Bucks, Northampton, Lehigh and Berks Counties. Amish High German is a hangover from German preaching in Pennsylvania churches during the last century. The English, as used by the Amish is American English built on a frame work of the Pennsylvania Dutch phonetic patterns and interjected continually with loan-translations from the dialect." A number of English words heavily coated with a foreign inflection enter into Amish speech although English loan-words are not as frequently used as one might imagine. Amish children of pre-school age cannot speak English. In order that they may be able to read the Bible or to understand the sermons and prayers and hymns they receive some instruction in High German in the elementary school.

They have little use for book-learning and less for book-farming. Their literary interests are confined to a knowledge of the Bible, the "Martyr's Mirror," the "Ausbund" and a few German books of devotion. They read local newspapers. Some of the young folks are beginning to take an interest in more secular books. The boys are fond of Zane Grey's stories of the West. The children get to see the comic strips now and then. The novels of Harold Bell Wright are read by some of the girls. These things are not countenanced by the elders.

The Sunday evening singings are not only social occasions but afford the young people an opportunity of learning songs of a more cheerful nature than the slow hymns of the Ausbund, which is probably the oldest hymn book in continuous use in America. It was first printed in Switzerland in 1564. Christopher Saur of Germantown published the first American edition in 1742. The title-page records that "these are some of the Beautiful Christian Hymns as they were composed here and there in prison in the castle or dungeon of Bassau by the Swiss Brethren and other believing Christians."

In his introduction to a compilation of Amish Hymns Joseph W. Yoder the author of "Rosanna of the Amish" says that the Amish tunes have their origin in the Gregorian chants which were assembled and given form in the sixth century by Pope Gregory. "Due to the principle that change is not desirable, the Amish people have continued the use of this music for centuries. For them this music has never been written but they passed it on from ear to ear for more than two hundred and fifty years."

#### *POLITICAL ATTITUDES*

The separation of Church and State has always been advocated and practiced by Anabaptists. In America the doctrine has been recognized ever since the days of Roger Williams. To the Amish, however, who take little interest in politics, separation of Church and State does not only mean non-interference of one in the functions of the other. They take the position that the State is secular or 'worldly,' and therefore the proper attitude

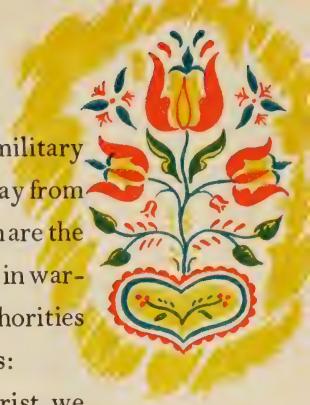


for the Amish is to take little interest in it and to assume as small a share in its affairs as is absolutely necessary. The rulings of government, in their view, are according to the flesh, the rulings of the Church according to the spirit. They believe that the State is a necessary evil because of man's wickedness. They pay their taxes without complaint. They seek to obey the laws, if they do not conflict with their moral sense or religious scruples. As a rule they do not go to the polls to vote, except perhaps in the election of a township school director or road supervisor. They do not hold any public office outside of their township. They are reluctant to serve on a jury. In all legal proceedings they refuse to swear an oath. They will give a simple affirmation in place of a formal oath. They believe that they must be subject to the higher powers, and therefore they do not object to saluting the flag of their country when occasion requires.

They have always practiced the doctrine of non-resistance believing conscientiously that it is wrong to go to war. They refuse to bear arms or to participate in anything relating to war. They are sincere in their conscientious objection to bear arms against their fellow men. This conviction has been seared into their souls by centuries of persecution. The United States government has always granted them exemption from combatant service. They have been sent into conservation work and into non-military camps, into special farm furloughs or reconstruction areas during the recent world wars.

They have frequently voiced their objections to restrictive government regulations especially cooperative schools.



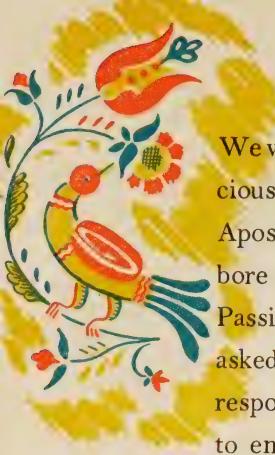


The policy of sending young Amishmen to non-military camps has not always been satisfactory. It took them away from the farms where they were really needed. The Amishmen are the best farmers in the world and their crops were essential in wartime. Some of them visited the United States military authorities during the second World War and stated their case thus:

“According to the example, life and doctrine of Christ, we are not to do wrong or occasion grief or vexation to any one. If necessity should require it, we are to flee for the Lord’s sake from one city or country to another, and suffer the spoiling of our goods, rather than give occasion of grief to any one; if we are struck on our right cheek, rather turn the other also than revenge ourselves, or return the blow. We advocate and ask and recommend that the members of our church stay on farms and live in districts or colonies where enough of our church people live and worship, in order that they can associate and stay with our faith as it has been our experience that members who leave our districts and farms have gotten away from the faith. We desire our members to live and worship as near like our forefathers have been accustomed to as possible.”

#### *AN INTERVIEW*

During the First World War a Lancaster lawyer and I were assigned the task of making an appointment with the Bishops of the Amish Church in order to induce them to grant their members the privilege of buying Liberty Bonds. An interview followed in a large kitchen of a country farm house in the Amish district.



We were deeply impressed with the dignity, courtesy and gracious demeanor of the Bishops. It was like meeting with the Apostles of old. Their grey bearded faces and kindly expression bore a resemblance to the characters in the Oberammagau Passion play, as they greeted each other with the holy kiss, and asked us to be seated. My companion spoke to them of the legal responsibility to support the government, after which I tried to emphasize the moral aspect of the matter. They listened attentively, asked no questions and made no commitments. We assured them that not all of the money paid for government Bonds was spent in ammunition, that much of it would be used for hospitalization and the alleviation of misery. The result was that shortly thereafter we learned the decision. It was to the effect that the Church neither commended nor condemned its members for buying government Bonds but left the matter to the conscience of the individual.

In the Second World War there were two types of Victory Bonds, known as War Bonds and Civilian Bonds. The Amish people did not buy the former, but did invest in the latter type of government securities to a limited extent.

#### *CHARITIES*

Throughout the period of war and post-war days the Amish people sent food, clothes and money to the starving people overseas. They helped in the support of all the local hospitals. They are generous in their care of dependent children, not by the establishment of orphanages but by taking them into their own

homes. They provide for the aged by giving them a life-right in their homes, and assuming the care of older people with a respect which is almost oriental in spirit. They have no use for old age assistance by the State. But they know what to do for those who no longer can do anything. They are glad to have them around, to give them the best room in the house, and to find them seated in the old arm-chair, so well named, *Sorgenstuhl*, seat of cares. This is the old patriarchal custom.

There has never been any question as to the charitable attitude of these people. To relieve the wretched is their joy.

#### *MUTUAL-AID*

As the Amish are loath to help in the armed defense of the government so they are firm in their stand against receiving any direct help from the government. They are not favorably impressed by the Federal social and economic legislation of recent times. They have their own social security. They have the best form of old age pension in the world. The old folks live easy while the younger members of the family carry on the farm. The Amish have had no one on the relief rolls of the government. If lightning strikes an Amishman's barn, his co-religionists build him a new barn. If he is sick they help him with his work. No one ever starves on an Amish farm. They are about as self-sufficient as any community in modern times can possibly be. They do not prescribe rules for outsiders and they do not want outsiders to prescribe rules for them. They are as self-sufficient as if they were the possessors of a medieval manor.



They cooperate among themselves but they are non-cooperative with any other group or organization. Life-insurance is held to indicate lack of trust in God, to be anti-Biblical; therefore, it is prohibited. They have their own form of co-operative property insurance and their own aid-plan. They are indifferent to all Farm Organizations and to all programs designed by the government to aid agriculture. There is little likelihood of unemployment among them. When the government insisted that they voluntarily reduce their average, they obeyed; but a very small proportion took government money for what they did not raise. The whole program did not appeal to their common sense.

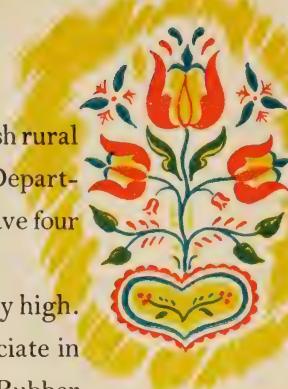
Very few Amishmen are engaged in industry. Very few work in factories or mills. Amish leaders have taken a position forbidding members of their congregations from joining a labor union. The reason given by the Bishops is that they want to keep the young people on their farms. Then, too, the Amish church is opposed to having its members join any secret organization or club of any kind.

#### *HORSES OR TRACTORS*

An interesting question has come into public discussion during the year. It relates to the use of machinery. The Amish have a large labor supply in the family and in the community. They also realize the necessity for mechanized forms of farm equipment. Usually their farms are well supplied with machinery.

When it comes to the use of tractors, however, the Amish make a fine distinction. Tractors may be used on a belt but not





in the field. Walter M. Kollmorgen, whose study of Amish rural life, made under the supervision of the United States Department of Agriculture, in a classic analysis of the subject, gave four reasons for the Amishman's disapproval of tractors.

"First: operating and depreciation expenses are very high. Horse-feed can be produced on the farm. Horses appreciate in value. "Second: The older tractors packed the ground. Rubber tires are forbidden. "Third: Tractor plowing is not as good as horse plowing. "Fourth: Leisure time gained by using mechanized equipment leads to trouble."

One Amishman bought a tractor and was threatened with expulsion from the church, and was forced to sell it. Then he suffered amnesia and wandered away from his huge farm for a few days. Thereupon a representative of the State Agricultural Adjustment Administration suggested that, in the interest of the starving world, the Amish farmers forego certain religious restrictions and use tractors instead of horses in the field. The battle was on. In the controversy which followed, the metropolitan and local newspapers took up the cudgels for the Amishman. Even the Wall Street Journal took part and wrote editorially: "Horses do not strike and tractors do not foal."

The fact is that the Amish have small farms, do intensive farming, rotate their crops, get their work done, produce more to the acre than others, leaving no fertile land lie fallow. If they want to work harder than others in order to do this by using horses and mules only, and it is a rule of their church, whose business is it but theirs? That is a natural question.



The Amish say: "Instead of telling us how to farm let the government send our boys home from public service camps. Every one of them is an experienced farmer. With their help we can increase production for the starving people of the world. The war is over and we can use them to provide food for every one that needs it. Our hearts go out to hungry people wherever they are. We not only feel sorry for them but we are putting our hearts into the plowshares and working for them."

#### *SOME STRANGE CUSTOMS*

Next to the family Bible, the Almanac is the Amish standby. The signs of the Zodiac tell them when to plant seeds.

They will not have their pictures taken. A photograph is considered an evidence of pride. Besides, the Bible forbids the making of any graven image. This means painting and sculpture as well as photography. The birds and flowers seem to be an exception to the Amish girl who embroiders.

Some of the Amish still believe in 'pow-wow' for sickness or ailments. Contrary to a general impression they do not believe in witch-craft, 'hexerei', and they have no special designs on their barns to drive away witches. Devices on barns would be looked upon as too 'fancy'—too ornamental.

So clean are they in their housekeeping that in one instance at least, the family cat has its paws wiped with a clean cloth before it is admitted inside the house.

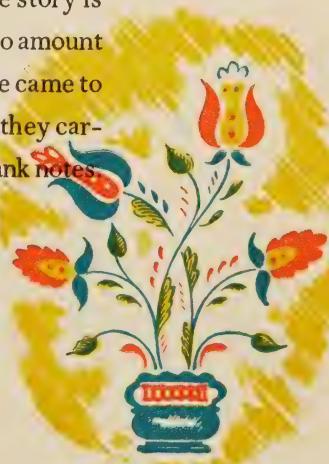
Barn raisings enable them to set up a barn worth ten thousand dollars in a day's time, after all preparations have been made.

Husking bees, quilting bees, threshing bees and neighborhood bees are still in existence.

An Amishman's work day is at least fifteen hours long. The family rises at four or five in the morning; breakfast at five-thirty, dinner at eleven and supper at four-thirty. To bed at nine is the rule on workdays. A smart Amish housekeeper can make a barrel of soap in the morning and visit in the afternoon.

There are no pulpits in Amish worship services; no house telephones, although they do have a few public telephone stations; no dash-boards or whip-sockets on their vehicles; no beauty parlors or barber shops; no electric refrigerators; no electric lights; except flash-lights or battery lights on vehicles; no electric motors on the farm or in the house; no musical instruments; no hearses or flowers at funerals, only horse-drawn wagons in a procession; no radio, no dances, no fairs or card games; no money spent for jewelry; no change in style of clothing; no divorces and no foreclosures of Amish farms; no furnaces and no central heating plant; no door-bells; no can openers, for the Amish need not eat out of tin cans. They raise their own food make their own clothes and build their own barns.

The Amish are well-to-do with plenty of good, hard, available cash that can be dug out of the sock, the pants pocket or the old shoe-box. They pay in cash for what they buy. The story is current concerning a real-estate transaction which was to amount to seventeen thousand dollars. When the Amish couple came to a lawyer's office to complete the transfer of property, they carried a small old shoe-box under the arm, stuffed with bank notes.



When the money was counted on the desk, it amounted to only fifteen thousand dollars. The old Amishman turned to his wife in an embarrassed way and said quietly: "Mommy, we must have brought the wrong box."

#### *CONCLUSION*

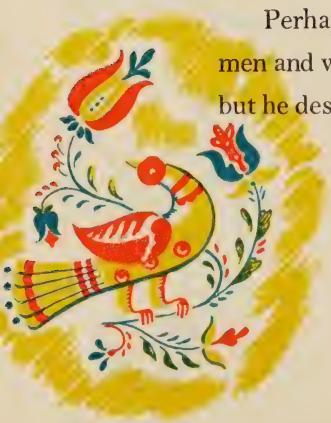
The Amish people are no better and no worse than many other groups. But they are different. They have strong virtues and decided limitations. They take every word of the Bible literally and sincerely try to live in twentieth century America as men lived in sixteenth century Europe or first century Palestine and Syria. All they ask is to be let alone in their noble experiment.

They are a hard working, hard living, hard praying folk. They are honest and keep their word. They are self-respecting prosperous and independent, and they live by their religion. They may not be partial to strangers, but they live a life of mutual-aid, good will and peaceful fellowship. Far be it from any man to ignore the virtues of these people.

They would agree with that other farmer-lad, Bobby Burns,

"To make a happy fireside clime  
To weans and wife  
That's the true pathos and sublime  
Of human life."

Perhaps Thomas Gray in his "Elegy" did not have the Amish men and women, who are the best farmers in America, in mind but he described them well in his lines,





“Oft did the harvest to their sickle yield,  
Their furrows oft the stubborn glebe hath broke;  
How early did they drive their team a-field,  
How bowed the woods beneath their sturdy stroke.

“Far from the madding crowd’s ignoble strife,  
Their sober wishes never learned to stray;  
Along the cool sequestered vale of life,  
They keep the noiseless tenor of their way.

These early settlers and pioneers of peace have been best  
portrayed in the Sonnet of our own Lloyd Mifflin:

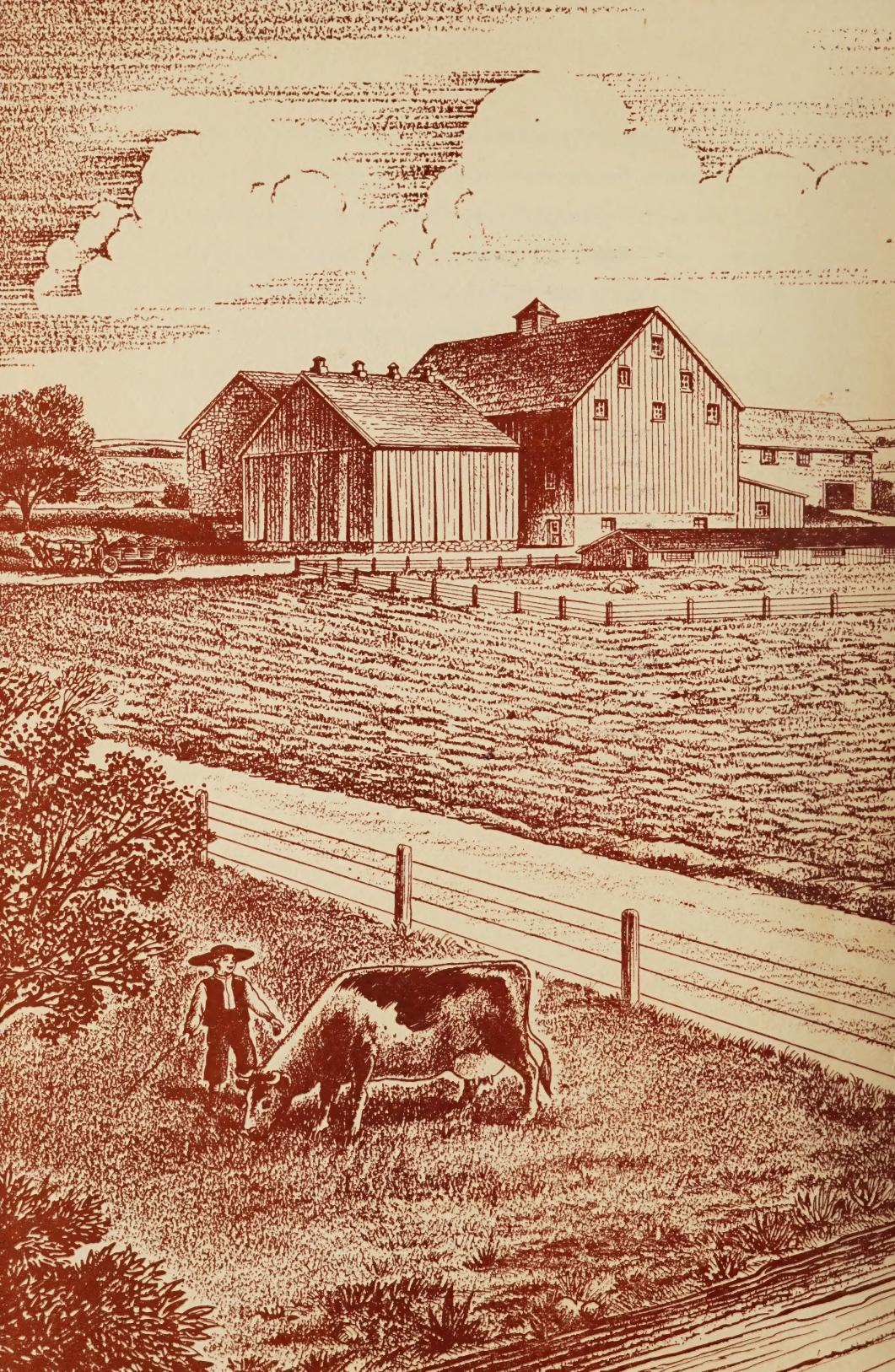
“Like some great patriarch of old he stands  
Among the sheaves—far from the town’s embroil—  
Bearded and grey, true sovereign of the soil;  
A later Boaz, at whose wise commands  
The harvest turns to gold. Lord of wide lands,  
Mellowed by cycles of unending moil,  
He typifies the dignity of toil,  
As earth attests the power of his hands.

Driven by persecution to our shore,  
A man of peace and Christian tolerance rare,  
With tranquil faith he thro’ life’s tumult goes,  
Nor ever turns the needy from his door;  
While thro’ the years of patient work and prayer  
He makes the valleys blossom as the rose.”

*This edition of the "History and Customs of the Amish People" by Dr. H. M. J. Klein of Lancaster, Pennsylvania consists of nine hundred and ninety numbered copies. Designed by Howard N. King and produced under his supervision by The Maple Press Company of York, Pennsylvania, published in December of 1946. The type, 14 point Bell was completely set by hand. The art, much of it sketched on an Amish farm, is by Howard Imhoff of York, Pennsylvania.*

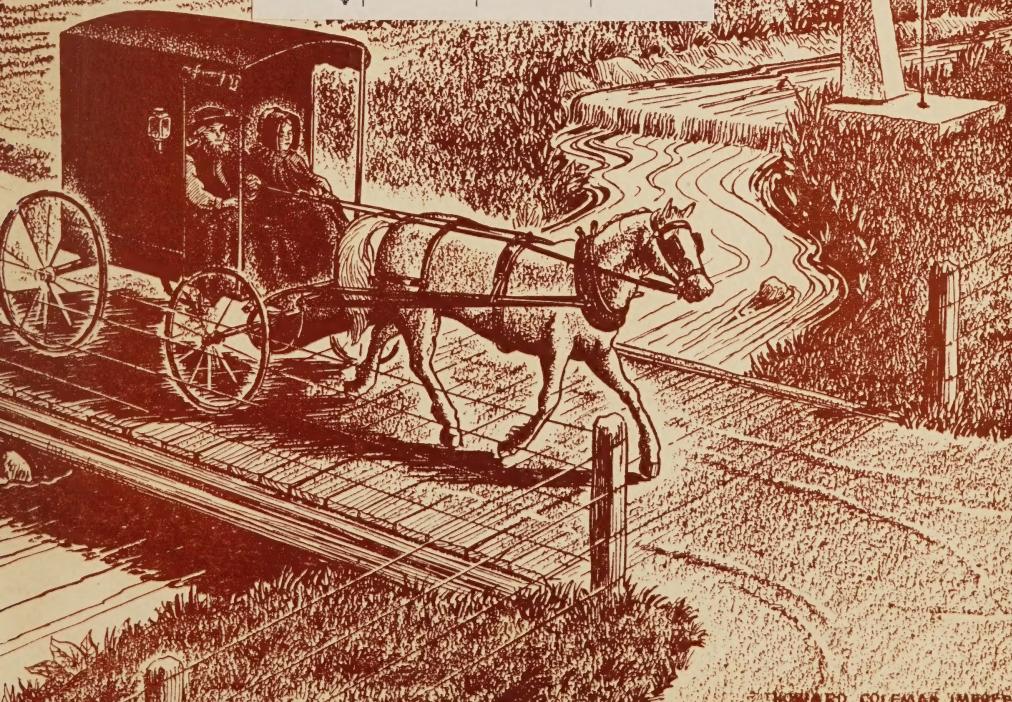






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